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THE ROMANCE OF THE  
BATTLE-LINE IN FRANCE





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# THE ROMANCE OF THE BATTLE-LINE IN FRANCE

WITH

AN ADDITIONAL CHAPTER

ON THE RESULTS OF THE LATE WAR  
AS AFFECTING OUR NATIONAL LIFE AND  
IMPERIAL INTERESTS

G.B.  
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BY

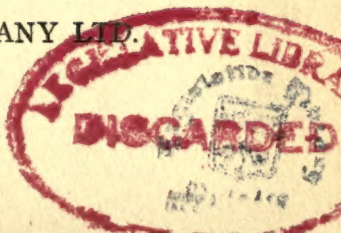
JOHN EDWARD COURTENAY BODLEY

CORRESPONDING MEMBER OF THE INSTITUTE OF FRANCE  
AUTHOR OF 'FRANCE'

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TO  
MY SONS  
WHO KNOW THE BATTLE-LINE OF THEIR NATIVE FRANCE  
WITHOUT ITS ROMANCE.

IN MEMORY OF 575 BROTHER OFFICERS  
AND 12,230 N.-C.-OFFICERS AND RIFLEMEN  
OF THE  
60<sup>TH</sup> RIFLES  
(KING'S ROYAL RIFLE CORPS)  
WHO DIED IN THE WAR



## INTRODUCTION

THIS little book was almost ready for publication, when the Armistice rendered necessary a number of alterations and additions. To travellers, who, now that the war is over, will repair to the scenes where our soldiers fought and died, it may perhaps be of some use as a tentative historical survey of the battle-fields in France—until a better one appears. The stream of visitors to the old war-zone will go on increasing for many a year ; and it is hoped that these pages may show the way to some young writer, who has taken part in the war, to produce an historical itinerary of the battle-lines on a more complete scale. Such a book, to claim any title to completeness, would have to be *un travail de longue haleine*, which my health does not allow me to undertake. For, as we shall see, every square mile of French soil on which our armies have fought is so abundant in historical associations,



that to treat the subject exhaustively would be a formidable task. But its surpassing interest would lighten the labour and redeem the time expended on the work.

The making of the book came about in this wise. In an Introduction to the English edition of *L'histoire de France racontée à tous*, published in 1916, I pointed out that while at normal times there was no pursuit so profitable and so fascinating as the familiar study of French history, its attractiveness for English people had increased a hundredfold, since the war had caused places in France to be associated in countless British homes with the memory of proud sorrow or of pathetic rejoicing. The name of each site so signalised had its part, great or small, in the imposing and picturesque procession of the annals of France. I quoted a number of such places to illustrate the richness in tradition of the French war-zone. The idea thus expressed aroused some interest in France, as well as in England. M. Welschinger, the eminent historian, who at last has had the joy of seeing the forces of Germany expelled from his native Alsace, presented this Introduction to our confrères of the Académie des Sciences Morales, remarking in an eloquent speech that

even Frenchmen are few who rightly appreciate the inexhaustible treasure of memories which cling to the soil of their country. The Editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, Mr. Harold Cox, having read this 'Introduction,' invited me to amplify the subject of its opening pages in two articles, which were published in his journal in 1918, under the title suggested by him, *The Romance of the Battle-Line in France*. On them the first portion of this book is founded, though nearly all has been rewritten, and as much new matter added as the original essays contained.

I was induced to make a book on their foundation, because of the pleasure these studies gave in their original form to certain young soldiers who had seen them on their return from the battle-line in France, which they had known without its romance. They said that as French history is not studied in our schools and universities, except by specialists, the most highly educated of our soldiers were unacquainted with the traditions and associations attaching to places where they had fought and suffered, or where they had seen their comrades die. The adventure of war had sharpened their curiosity to understand everything that came their way, and they told me how pleased they were to learn

something about the history, or to be able to reconstitute the past of the scenes of their hard campaigning. It was for such that the book was primarily intended, in the hope that it might give an hour's diversion to tired soldiers, billeted between two battles in some old town sketched in these pages, or to convalescents who might be glad to hear of the romance of places which they had associated only with wounds and the shadow of death.

The Armistice changed these conditions. But among the visitors to the battle-zone will be many soldiers who go back to view the grim theatre of their hardships and their valour. Every region of this devastated territory is full of signs and memories of their tragic labour, and strangers who go thither for the first time will be fortunate if they see these places under the guidance of a hero who fought there. From his modest and reluctant lips they may hear a recital of epic pathos. Yet as with aching remembrance he tries to repeople these empty scenes, he will be conscious of his incapacity to describe the full horror of what he witnessed :

*'Quis cladem illius noctis, quis funera fando  
Explicet aut possit lacrimis aequare labores?'*

While it is impossible for any non-combatant



who views these places to realise the agonising drama of which they were the scene, perhaps the following pages may help explorers of the battlefields, civilians or soldiers, to have some notion of the former aspect and circumstances of the vastest wilderness ever seen in Europe—a desert four hundred miles long, where, until the Germans came, stood towns, villages, churches, châteaux, farms, and forests, whose sites are now as unrecognisable as that of ancient Troy. This devastation when viewed in the silent solitude of what is called ‘peace,’ has a curious effect on the minds of survivors of the battles. One of them who revisited the ground soon after the Armistice said it was an experience more woeful than anything in the war. Then the soldier did not notice the desolation wrought around him, amid the rage of fighting and its deafening din, with masses of troops and transport filling the furious scene. But now to see this countryside without a scrap of cultivated soil and denuded of habitations, except where a piteous camp of peasants had come to search for traces of their little homes—fills a British soldier with compassionate anguish for France, and a set conviction that Germany ought to be stripped to the last extremity to compensate our comrades in arms to

whom this land belonged. For without their aid Kent and Norfolk and many an English shire might have been in the same deadly plight.

One of the minor hardships of the war is that few of the survivors of the armies of Greater Britain, without whose spontaneous aid victory might still be far away, will ever see again the plains and hillsides where sleep thousands of their comrades from Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Newfoundland, and the Cape, or the old French towns they passed through, which the Hun failed to destroy. It is indeed sad that these ardent young spirits from the New World, including allies from the United States, all keenly interested in the traditions of the Old World, whence their ancestors came, should return to their distant homes without seeing anything of the European continent but the camp, the battle-ground and the hospital. Most of them were descended from Britons of the race which fought on these same fields of Flanders and Picardy in any generation since French Plantagenet kings of England waged war on Valois kings of France; while some of them, from Quebec, Louisiana, and South Africa, traced their ancestry to Frenchmen of the ancient monarchy. Whatever the European origin of

these heroes from the overseas, it is hoped that this little book may fall into the hands of some of them to remind them that places, to which they have added a new tradition of valour and self-sacrifice, were in olden times historic scenes in which their forefathers moved. All soldiers who read these pages may reflect that in the past there are romantic associations attached to these places, such as they have not encountered in their rude experience. For the romance of war is dead. The old battles fought in this same region, from Crécy to Fontenoy, abounded in romantic incidents to mitigate the asperities of mortal conflict ; while modern warfare in the mechanical age is a scientific venture of un-mixed horror, calling for cold courage and endurance, such as bygone soldiers had rarely to evince.

The shortcomings of this book can be to no one so apparent as to its author. An initial difficulty was the order in which places should be mentioned on an ever-fluctuating battle-line. Even now that the war is over, it is not easy to see what plan would have been better than the one adopted. Another difficulty is one experienced by all writers of history—that of duly apportioning the space allotted to the different

places and events passed in review. Even in a big work no one has ever been able to do this with exactitude. In a little book it is hopeless to attempt it. When a writer who knows well an ancient land sets about surveying it, such a flood of recollection and tradition rises before him that from the abundant mass of material he must needs pick and choose that which seems likeliest to interest his readers, without paying undue attention to the relative proportions of his recitals. My general aim has been to select examples which display the infinite variety of French history. For the little work has no pretension to be an historical text-book. My hope is that it may serve rather as an indicator to stimulate readers to study for themselves the romance and the story of places, the names of which they have hitherto associated with their own courage and endurance, or with the loss of beings dear to them.

In this connection, reverting to my suggestion that some young writer who has been through the war may make use of these pages as a foundation for a full itinerary of the war-zone, I would offer him this piece of advice. Keen soldier as he may be, let him resolutely refrain from overloading his book with the past



military history of the arena of the great war, or a dozen volumes will not suffice for his prose. For this territory had been the scene of a thousand important battles and sieges before the twentieth century, and, as is pointed out on a later page, the history of the wars of which they formed a part is the history of modern civilisation. In reviving the past of these places it is often necessary to refer to campaigns and invasions ; but in a book for general readers their copious chronicles should be only incidentally quoted, or they will overwhelm the others. No doubt there are many survivors of the war for whom the past military history of the places where they fought has a more attractive interest. For example, a soldier capable of using his pen, who took part in the campaigns of the Marne, the Aisne, the Oise or the Somme, has fine material for a monograph on the relatively primitive art of war practised by Napoleon in the Campagne de France of 1814, compared with the new methods followed on the same ground a century later—a subject only glanced at in this book. But such a comparative study well deserves separate treatment.

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It is perhaps necessary to add some words in explanation of the supplementary chapter appended to the following pages, as its connection with the Romance of the Battle-Line is only incidental.

While there are many young survivors of the war capable of illustrating with their pens in one way or another the scenes of their campaigning, we have to lament a much larger number of young soldiers of the highest intellectual promise who died on these fields of France, and on more distant battle-grounds. They were the fine flower of an unusually brilliant generation which seemed likely to remove the reproach of barrenness from our old universities and public schools. When one thinks how these youths cheerfully quitted their studies and their opening careers, leaving in some cases a fragment of unfinished work to show what their maturer talent might achieve, the question arises—for what purpose have they perished before their time? The question applies indeed to all the hundreds of thousands of our youth who died in the war, which has taken exorbitant toll of the fittest of our citizens drawn from all classes of the Empire. But in all ages a particular pity has been inspired by the untimely extinction

of high intellectual gifts. We may adapt the words of a great historian of antiquity who lamented the destruction by earthquake of a famous seat of learning, and say that our armies were filled with the rising spirits of the age, and many a youth perished who might have lived to be the ornament or the guardian of his country.

It is this consideration which suggested the additional chapter at the end of the book. In a sense it is independent of what goes before, and its perusal may be omitted by readers more interested in the historic memories of the battleground than in the less attractive, though perhaps more important, theme of the objects of the war and its results on our national life. The reflections of which it is the outcome must have arisen in the mind of many and many an incomplete citizen who, to his sorrow, was too old to fight, and had to endure the proud humiliation of seeing his boys offer their young lives for the comfortable protection of their elders. Such an one, on a thousand days, rose each morning with fear lest before nightfall a dread message might bring desolation on his house. As weeks and months sped on, even though his home, happier than that of many a friend and neigh-

bour, had no worse tidings than those of wounds and sickness, he grew impatient at the sermonising of politicians about 'ideals' for which our young soldiers were dying, especially when salaried idealists, young enough to be fighting, dishonoured parliamentary privilege by making it a shelter from patriotic service. As to the soldier-boys, blithely confident of victory, not one in a thousand knew or cared anything about the latent 'moral causes' of the war. If Russia or any other power had challenged us, as Germany did, they would have gone forth just as cheerfully as they did to the Boer War, the justice of which was not incontestably apparent. It is true that when the enemy showed himself a treacherous and barbarous foe they soon were inspired with a wholesome intent to disable the insolent race. But as for offering their young lives for the purpose of 'putting down militarism,' they were as innocent of this and of other theoretical motives for self-sacrifice as are our regiments in India when to their joy they are sent to a dangerous frontier war. It was enough for our young soldiers that England needed them: and before conscription was imposed, our superb little regular army was supplemented by crowds of volunteers who

had no other motive for taking up arms than to save this island from invasion, and to go '*quo fas et gloria ducunt*,' as our gallant gunners say. From every distant corner of Greater Britain came forth also the youth of our oversea dominions, simply to fight for the threatened British flag, and knowing no other ideal than the supremacy of that symbol of empire.

It was the disillusion of many of the best of our young heroes which gave rise to my reflections, set down in imperfect form in the additional chapter. Their disillusion was in nowise due to the deadly misery they were enduring. To the end they liked the actual fighting in spite of its accompanying hardship. The only favour I ever asked of the War Office was in supporting the request of a young officer, who had been sent home on a fortnight's sick-leave, and wished to return to his post beneath the Yser Canal at the end of a week. This enthusiasm for fighting went on to the very day of the Armistice when, in the last half-hour before cease-firing sounded, young soldiers of every rank and from every land in the British Empire urgently volunteered to take part in the desperate risks of a final assault, with the lightheartedness of sportsmen who on the last afternoon of hunting



beg the master-of-hounds to draw one more cover 'to finish the season.'

With all their dauntless love of fighting, many young soldiers, as the war went on, became dubious about the eventual purpose of their sacrifice. The death of beloved comrades, often before their eyes, afflicted them more than their own impending fate. What was it all for that their joyous companions of the cricket-field, the classroom or the home, were killed or blinded or maimed? It was for England no doubt. But for what England? The England of their boyish memories and of their adolescent dreams? or the England they had observed from the training camp or which met their eyes, grown critical, when they came home for a rest, or were carried thither in a Red Cross ambulance? After the self-denying discipline of the trench and the battlefield, after the daily scene of super-human disinterestedness they came home to England of the self-seeking politicians and of the corrupt traders cynically enjoying the fortune of war, and profiting from the same catastrophe which every week was sending to death thousands of British youths.

In 1916 there was privately printed a collection of letters written from the front by two



brothers, both animated with the joy of battle, and free from that pessimism with which suffering often affects the bravest. They were fine athletes and scholars, and poets of the true note who went on singing on the battlefield and in the shadow of death. Eton and Balliol had rarely sent forth a more happily gifted pair. The elder died of wounds at Boulogne, and from his deathbed the younger went to wait his hastening turn. Ten days before he died, leading a forlorn charge, near where his brother fell, he wrote under shell-fire a letter containing a serene tribute to another soldier-poet, that gallant Rugbeian Rupert Brooke, who found a poet's resting-place in a dream-like island of the Aegean ; and then turning from this noble theme, he added as his final message home : ' I am glad not to be in England now. What a sad, disgraceful, un-ennobled, burglarious huckster among nations we are.'

There is no need for further quotations in this sense. There will be few English readers of these pages who have not seen similar complaints in letters from the front, or heard them from the lips of soldiers—including many who came to fight for the Empire from its distant boundaries and whose touching gratitude for little attentions paid to them in the Mother Country did not

blind them to unedifying sights in England which moderated their self-sacrificing loyalty. The constant query of misgiving uttered by our brave defenders could not fail to find an echo in the minds of all who have followed the course of events in this country during the war, unaffected by the interested rhetoric of politicians. The supplementary chapter founded on such reflections was nearly finished before the Armistice. Not a few additions and alterations will be necessary before it is published, and it will be revised by the light of events now impending. But nothing seems likely to happen calling for change in its general tenor.

Amid the downfall of dynasties and the recasting of frontiers, with revolution sweeping over the continent and echoing loudly within our island shores, our primary preoccupation must be the destiny of the British race. We are nominally victors in the war, and we are staggering under the blows of victory. Burdened with debt and bereft of an entire generation of our youth, we look in vain for trust-inspiring leaders to guide us ; for these years of vicissitude have produced none. The war has brought out all that is noblest and all that is basest in our race. Unhappily a very large proportion of its best

elements has perished while all that is worst survives. A war-enriched non-combatant would call it the survival of the fittest. We must hope that in the remnant of the young generation will be found leaders and reconstructors who will restore health to all nations. For neither in the British Empire nor in any other community is there any prospect of the 'old gangs' (to use a political colloquialism) undoing the evil done by themselves and their contemporaries. In the strange paradoxal subversion of things which this war has caused in all the relations of human existence, the sons have become the exemplars for the fathers. Chief among them are the devoted youths who laid down their lives for us. Dr. Butler, the venerable Master of Trinity, himself stricken by the war in his last days, wrote to one of his old Harrovians who had lost two sons: 'These brave young ones become the teachers and almost the prophets of us elders, and beacon to us to follow them as they followed the sacred call of duty.' The good old man in using this expressive verb no doubt had in mind Shelley's lines on Keats, of pathetic aptness to-day:—

'The soul of Adonais like a star  
Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are.'

For he was the son of Byron's master at Harrow and was familiar with all that was written by the trio of poets, whom he would have known had they not died before their prime far from England, like our young heroes of the battle-line.

There is nothing morbid in the faithful remembrance of the dead, especially of those who died young on the field of honour. There is much more morbidity in the feverish haste to forget them, which would seem to attribute the highest meed of civic virtue to those insatiate heroines who have contracted two or even three 'war marriages.' What is praised as courage in supporting bereavement is often indifference; and callousness in the face of the greatest tragedy that has even befallen a people, is a sign of decadence rather than of fortitude. Never shall we recover from the human havoc of the war if the surviving generation does not teach its progeny to keep in everlasting memory the young lives nobly sacrificed that we might live. The people who feel most deeply are not all broken-hearted mothers or unwarlike men of lachrymose sensibility. In France, where the cult of the dead is one of the most humanising and salutary influences in the nation, the bravest of the brave



have no false shame in avowing their affliction. A story relating to one of them, who had seen three valiant sons fall before the enemy, reaches me just as these lines are being written: 'Que comptez-vous faire après la guerre?' demandait-on au Général de Castelnau, et lui de répondre: "Je pleurerai mes fils."'

This preface, contrary to custom, was written before the completion of the book—at the close of the 'year of victory.' On this particular day the Western Church has ordained a mournful service in contrast to the joyous celebrations of the season, and in it is sung a lamentation originally inspired by the untimely death of young soldiers in the regions which we now associate with the glorious names of Maude and Allenby. Never since the verse was first written in a dialect of the East or translated into Latin a thousand years later, after it had been applied to a more recent event, has it had more pathetic pertinence than at the end of this war: 'Rachel plorans filios suos et noluit consolari, quia non sunt.'





# THE ROMANCE OF THE BATTLE-LINE IN FRANCE

## PART I

IN France the scenes of the great war lie within the departments of the Nord, Pas-de-Calais, Somme, Oise, Aisne, Seine-et-Marne, Marne, Ardennes, Meuse, Vosges, Meurthe-et-Moselle (formed in 1871 of fragments, saved from annexation, of two departments of Lorraine), and the Territory of Belfort (which is similarly a fragment of Alsace spared to France, too small to form a department). Of the eighty-six departments one alone, the Ardennes, was completely occupied by the enemy, and ten were partially invaded. The rest have seen the German only as a prisoner of war, though there is not a commune of France near to or remote from the war-zone which has not been sorely affected. Consequently only a small proportion of the surface of France has been within the fluctuating battle-line. Rela-

tively small as this area is, it is one of surpassing variety in scenery, product, and characteristic. It contains the chief coalfield of France, and consequently the richest industrial district, so that its occupation by the enemy was an overwhelming financial and economical disaster to the nation. Away from its smoky towns and villages—which indeed are less unlovely than our own mining and manufacturing centres of population—the invaded territory contains vast tracts of what was the finest agricultural land in France, forests covering wide plains and lofty mountains, and a province of vineyards which gives its name to the most famous of all the wines of the world. There are many regions in France richer in romantic traditions, such as Touraine, Burgundy, and Provence. Yet this corner of north-eastern France has more historical associations on its soil than the whole of Great Britain.

The comparative poverty of our British soil in this respect is chiefly due to our insular position, which for nearly nine centuries saved us from invasion. For most of the historical traditions of north-eastern France are the outcome of war, and of invasion in which the French were as often the invaders as their enemies. Even those traditions which are derived from movements

and events within the French nation are connected with international affairs. Thus the great Revolution did not long remain a merely domestic event. Its influence travelled all over Europe, not by peaceful means, and its chief missionary, whose name and figure are associated with every battle-ground of to-day, except those of Arabia and further Africa, was Napoleon. The abundant memories of our own country which are associated with landmarks of history had all been established when France began to lay in a fresh store, and the new series was founded on thrilling or romantic episodes, and on decisive events changing the destinies of the world as important as any which dated from the distant past.

Our revolutions, which had no repercussion beyond our boundaries, came to an end in 1649 'in the open street before Whitehall,' and in the mild epilogue of forty years later, when James II. migrated to Saint Germain to be the pensioner of his cousin Louis XIV. Soon two centuries will have passed since the final sequel of our revolutions caused the last battles to be fought on British ground, in 1745. The historical and romantic associations within our island shores, which oversea visitors cherish perhaps more

than we do, are attached to places chiefly notable for the long tradition of peaceful life, which has continued unbroken for centuries.

France has few associations such as these, which our restoring architects and reforming politicians and the inroads of the mechanical age have failed to destroy outright; it contains scarcely any great ancestral homes where the life of a family has gone on without interruption, from generation to generation since the walls were built, of which houses a few survive in England. The noblest monument of unbroken tradition in England was Oxford, and there is nothing to compare with it or with Cambridge in France or in any other country. But the succession of our two old Universities has now been sundered. Not only have they sent their sons by thousands to the war, but a greater number of adolescents, who would have sustained the immemorial link between public-school and University have passed a sterner matriculation than that which Alma Mater imposed—the flower of young England sacrificed for the blind incapacity of their elders, who here, as in all other lands, have failed to comprehend the new civilisation committed to their charge.

It was not usual for undergraduates to die.



An old Oxford man who visits the tombs at Holywell finds the epitaph of many a once familiar high-tabled don, but rarely an inscription lamenting the untimely end of joyous student-life. Now undergraduates have learned to die, in the deserts of Asia, as well as on the stricken plains of France. Perhaps one day our laudable *Pietas Oxoniensis* will issue from the University Press a record of the places where our young heroes sleep, giving the brief life-story of each Oxford man, graduate or undergraduate, whose graves line every battle-field where British soldiers have fought.

While tragic reflections such as these are suggested by the names of nearly all the places mentioned in these pages, each one of them, when its history is examined, is seen to be full of memories of infinite variety not associated with the annals of war—so fertile in tradition is the soil of France. At the same time an account of all the past battles waged on the scenes where English and French have recently met the German, and of their causes, would embrace the whole history of civilisation, the culmination of which has turned into soldiers the manhood of all the human race which boasts itself civilised. If universal war is its crowning result, the war-

zone may be considered the training-ground of western civilisation. For ever since Cæsar campaigned two thousand years ago in the parts *quas incolunt Belgæ*, no half-century has passed without war within or on the confines of that region—not local conflicts, but war which has involved the destinies of western Europe. Before the Revolution the French names of the areas which covered the ground of the departments already enumerated were Flanders, Artois, Picardy, Île de France, Champagne, Trois Évêchés, Barrois, Lorraine, and Alsace. Those names do not take us back to antiquity ; but since the Middle Ages each of them, except Île de France, has denoted territory the ownership of which has swung backwards and forwards, from French to Spaniard, from German to Burgundian, with all the historic wars of Europe as accompaniments to each transfer.

From a glance at one short epoch of French history we may see how the destinies of France and of Europe have been fashioned by the force of arms in the region of which Arthur Young wrote at Cambrai in 1787, when noting Vauban's and his predecessors' fortifications of the towns of Flanders, 'every step in this country has been rendered famous or infamous by the bloodiest wars

that have disgraced or exhausted Christendom.' There is a rare and noble folio which was printed in Paris at the Imprimerie Royale in 1722, entitled *Médailles sur les principaux événements du règne entier de Louis le Grand avec des explications historiques* [1643-1715]. The crimson of its binding is emblazoned with the cypher of the Grand Monarque among crowns and fleurs-de-lys, and it is, as Saint-Simon described it, 'un grand volume de la plus magnifique impression du Louvre'—it having been printed at the royal press which Richelieu set up in the palace. It cannot be called a handbook, as its majestic size needs for its commodious study a spacious lectern, such as one may see in the choirs of ancient monasteries ; yet it forms an excellent and concise manual of the reign of Louis XIV.—from a one-sided point of view. Each vast page contains a clear-cut engraving of the obverse and reverse of a medal with explanatory text. There are more than three hundred of them, from the earliest effigies of the baby king and the pleasing likeness of the gracious young autocrat who won the heart of La Vallière, to the pompous profile of the time-worn bigot who was ruled by Mme de Maintenon. Of all this collection about one hundred medals, a third of them, celebrate events

which took place in the zone of the late war. The other two hundred signalise peaceful as well as warlike occasions—royal marriages, the building of Versailles, the extirpation of heresy, the foundation of the Academy of Inscriptions, for the purpose of providing devices of terse latinity to illuminate these medals—this volume being an early production of that learned body. But every one of the hundred medals relating to this region commemorates a battle, a siege, or a treaty—the outcome of war. Thus there are two inscribed *Ypris-Captis*, reminding us that the devastators of the Palatinate could take and retake a city without the barbarous ruin of noble monuments, which even then were the ancient pride of Flanders. One of them is of 1648, with the portrait which in another of this period is labelled *Puer Triumphator*; the other, in 1678, marks a more serious capture, as Ypres remained French until 1713, when almost the last medal of the book celebrated the Treaty of Utrecht with the motto *Spes felicitatis orbis*—a warning to optimists who hope for world-wide felicity to result from treaty-made peace. For rarely has a compact been the spring of such prolonged dissension as was this Treaty of Utrecht, which was to settle all international conflicts from Alsace to New-



foundland, and which even between France and England was a subject of difference until 1904.

With such wealth of association evoked by the names of a hundred towns and villages in France, victims or witnesses of the present war, only a few can be chosen in illustration. We might begin at the beginning with the retreat from Mons, which at the close of August 1914 sent those first tragic lists to desolate British homes, without a warning that they would be multiplied till a whole generation of our heroic youth was blotted out. Right and left of that first march lie places famous in history. The first French hamlet passed was Malplaquet, where 'Malbrook' and Prince Eugène met a gallant foe with such fortune that the battle of September 11, 1709, was not inscribed in the medal-book of Louis XIV. Are many of us aware that the last fight of the late war was the second battle of Malplaquet? Perhaps other places may have an equal claim. But it is the fact that on November 8, 1918, the day the Germans came to ask for an armistice, there was a combat on the historic ground of Marlborough's most costly victory, where a gallant Rugbeian, captain of the Warwicks, was among the last sad victims of the war; and three days later, near this old battle-field, the last



shots at the enemy were fired by Canadian guns, which have since been presented to the town of Mons. Valenciennes, which saw the passage of our army, is full of romantic associations. Here was born Froissart, who found many a legendary subject of his chronicles (such as that of the burghers of Calais, perpetuated in art by the most modern of French sculptors) in the adjacent regions, when he was *clerc* to our Queen Philippa, who also came from Hainault. It is also the birthplace of Watteau, not one example of whose joyous and sunlit fancy suggests that the painter spent half of his brief life of suffering in this sombre northern town. Perhaps it will be more convenient to follow that longer route known as the Western Front, which runs from the Belgian frontier on the Straits of Dover to Lorraine. That long line often fluctuated during the war. So it will not be possible always to go from place to place in geographical order, and sometimes we shall have to retrace our steps.

Near the extreme left of that line there rises from the plain of Flanders a solitary hill, crowned by the little town of Cassel, *castellum Morinorum* of the Romans. Arthur Young, when he rode up the Mount in 1787, said it was 'the only hill in Flanders,' a statement which our tired soldiers,

who know many a blood-stained ridge in those parts, are disposed to doubt. There is Mont Kemmel, which the Germans took in their last vain effort to reach the Channel ports, and nearer the road to Poperinghe is the Mont des Cats with its Trappist convent. But the striking feature of Cassel is what the geographer Onésime Reclus said of it : ' *Le mensonge et la magie de l'isolement dans la plaine,*' which makes it dominate the flat country around. The road from Dunkirk winds beneath an avenue of trees, up the hill, and enters the town through an ancient archway bearing the trace of the portcullis. Except for one or two modern hotels, Cassel has a mysterious old-world look which soldiers, freed for a short rest from the dread 'Salient,' said impressed them by its gravity, making the most boisterous of them relapse into silent contemplation of these ancient buildings which, after suffering siege and capture and pillage in twenty centuries, just escaped the tide of ravage in the recent war.

Tourists have neglected this picturesque site, French Flanders being off their accustomed track ; though sometimes a traveller has strayed this way, as did Disraeli one parliamentary holiday when in lucky search of a quiet place near home

for undisturbed literary work. For those who love extended views where every landmark indicates a spot where history has been made, Cassel is unrivalled—even in France, a land of wide prospects, where from a height it is not uncommon to see the Alps a hundred and fifty miles away, as from the cathedral battlements at Langres. The peculiarity of Mont Cassel is that though it is of modest height, not much superior to that of Strasburg spire, it rises from a vast plain, so the view from it is on all sides coterminous with the horizon. To enjoy its full extent a day of transparent atmosphere, rare in Flanders, which endures an English climate, is necessary. Then, from the summit, one hundred and thirty towns and villages are said to be visible, and nearly as many belfries and church-towers, from the belfry at Bruges in Belgium to the steeples of Artois and Picardy. On such a rare day, when the white cliffs of England for once are not wreathed in fog, one can make out beyond the sea the South Foreland, where Cæsar landed in Britain two thousand years ago. It needs imagination, even with a telescope, to descry further west Dungeness overlooking the spot where the Normans landed eleven hundred years later, when the history of invasions of

British soil was supposed to have ended. But there is another point, visible from here, on the cliffs at Dover which changed that tradition when a bold young French airman, stealing a march on his English rivals, flew across the Channel five years before the war, and by his landing on Shakespeare Cliff, in July 1909, proclaimed that England is no longer an island.

The inland view embraces an expanse of country which has heard the echo of nearly every war recorded in the history of western Europe. When the Hundred Years' War swept backwards and forwards over it, there was no spot in it which had not already a long record of battles and sieges. The field of Crécy, down Abbeville way, is too far to be visible from Cassel, but the rising ground above Agincourt can be discerned. There are also several places within sight where French and English men-at-arms have met without leaving memories of hostility. Thus we can 'look towards Ardres' Golden Field, across this wide aerial plain,' where the two comeliest young kings of the Renaissance met in friendly joust on the Champ du Drap d'Or. Nearer we can see, by Dunkirk, the site of the battle of the Dunes, which has the peculiar renown of a battle-field in France where English soldiers fought on



both sides. It was in 1658, when Mazarin was acting with Cromwell, who in the last year of his life was the ally of young Louis XIV. The Protector sent 6000 troops to join the French under Turenne against the Spanish army, in which the Great Condé was fighting ; for the battle of the Faubourg Saint Antoine, during the Fronde, had thrown M. le Prince into the arms of the Spaniards. On their side, too, was an English force, including a hundred men of the King's Regiment of Guards, under his brother, the Duke of York, the corps which ultimately became the Grenadier Guards. This little band vainly fought to prevent Dunkirk from falling to the English—a conquest basely cancelled four years later by the elder of the Stuart brothers, who sold the town to Louis XIV. In his Medal Book the presence of the English on either side and also the part taken by Condé are ignored in the text describing the battle of the Dunes, and the Medal celebrating the fight is simply inscribed *Hispanis caesis*, which shows that the censorship of official accounts of battles is as old as the Grand Siècle.

At Cassel in 1677 the Duc d'Orléans beat the Prince of Orange in a battle followed by the capitulation of Saint Omer, which, with Cambrai, Valenciennes, and Maubeuge, became French by



the Treaty of Nimeguen in 1678. Its towers and spires are conspicuous from Cassel only ten miles away. We now associate Saint Omer with the British Headquarters in 1914, where our old Field Marshal died three months after the declaration of the war which he, unheeded, had predicted. But for many generations the *Fanum Sancti Audomari* had in its domestic annals a romantic association with England. It was in Spanish dominion when Philip II., not from love for our nation, aided the English Jesuits to build their famous college here. Some years later there were stealthy comings and goings between Saint Omer and Ashby Saint Ledgers, till a letter to Lord Monteagle shortened the lives of several of its promising pupils. Saint Omer was never a school of love for England: 'Hate at Saint Omer's into caution drilled,' was said of its renowned son, O'Connell. Yet many of its students, from ancient English manors with their priest-holes and clandestine oratories, were of that good stock of our hereditary Catholics who, in spite of penal laws, were loyal to the British Crown to the extent of being reproached in later days for Gallicanism or Cisalpinism by fiery converts who had not so suffered for their religion. John Carroll, born in 1735, who was consecrated first

Roman Catholic Bishop in the United States at one of those English homes of the ancient faith, Lulworth Castle, was educated at Saint Omer, and at Watten, the novitiate of the English province, which stands on a hillock in Artois, also visible from Cassel. He knew an aged English father there, Levinus Brown, whose loyalty to England was encouraged by his friendship with Alexander Pope. The old Jesuit, being nearly a hundred when in 1762 the Society was expelled from France (eleven years before its dissolution by Clement XIV.'s Brief *Dominus ac Redemptor Noster*), was allowed to end his days at Saint Omer after witnessing a remarkable series of religious conflicts and vicissitudes in France—the development of the Gallican movement, the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, the controversy on Quietism, the destruction of Port Royal, and the condemnation of the Jansenists, down to the suppression of his own Order. Reflection on these pious subjects, as well as on the hopes and fears of holy Church in England during the chequered pastorate of the Vicar of Bray, was more than once rudely disturbed in this secluded cloister by the noise of siege and battle.

The noise of siege and battle has once more died away. But their resulting ruin now sums

up the landscape viewed from Cassel in another direction. The flat prospect was never picturesque, but the ugly cloud which hung over chimney-stacks and furnaces was a sign of the richness and industry of France ; while the smoke which for four years rose from the plain marked a trail of destruction more dire than ever this war-worn region had suffered. Some of these dark industrial towns had features which dated from another age : a bit of Vauban's fortifications or a Flemish town-hall, and always a belfry—a relic of the days when proud and prosperous city fathers disputed the Church's right to chiming and bell-ringing. The belfry of Bailleul, before the Germans set fire to the town in 1918, formed with the hôtel de ville, in a fine cobbled square, a pile of architecture such as in England is seen only on the stage in opera, which made young British soldiers, halting there on the inexorable road to battle, feel that they were taking part in a big drama. To-day Bailleul is ruined even more completely than Ypres. The handsome square, with the hôtel de ville and its belfry, is a wilderness of ruin and sand, where British soldiers who had quarters in the prosperous, cheerful old town would seek in vain any trace of the ancient monuments they admired.

To the south-east lies Armentières, and beyond it, stretching to the Belgian frontier, the great group of towns occupied by the Germans in the first weeks of the war, of which Lille is the chief. The tragedy of that great centre of industry is such as cannot be realised in England. Those ancient cities—Lille, Roubaix, and Tourcoing—which form one vast urban area with ten times the population contained in it a century ago, have been the pride of their enterprising citizens, who from father to son have created and developed their prosperity. The French *industriel* (to use the term of which we have no equivalent) is of a fine and unique type, the mainstay of the nation, though for the most part excluded from its government and administration. Unlike the similar class in England, he rarely lays out his acquired wealth in the purchase of a country seat, and never in the purchase of things corresponding to our peerages and baronetcies. For the taking of titles costs nothing in France and the *haute bourgeoisie* has no use for them. The French wealthy man of business retains his old home amid the smoke which has made his riches, where year after year he has watched the progress of his buildings and machinery. To such patriotic citizens, to have their factories, their mines, and their forges



seized by the enemy, and the products diverted to the ruin of their own country, is an experience even more heartrending than that of thousands of Frenchmen of every degree who have had the poignant grief to see only their dwellings devastated by the invader.

To-day if an Englishman climbs the Mount of Cassel or one of the lofty towers which overlook the Flemish plain with a guide who can designate the landmarks upon it, their names will signify to him places where English boys have died. Before the war the recital of the names might have recalled the adventures of the Three Musketeers ; for the expanse, stretching down to where Béthune and its tall belfry stood, is the Dumas country. To-day, by a pathetic reversal of ideas, the pages of Dumas père, describing this region, call to mind scenes which were the last beheld by young heroes who came from all parts of the British Empire to die in Flanders.

Take this passage from *Vingt Ans Après*, when the son of Athos was riding to join the Staff of Condé, before the battle of Lens :

‘ The little troop trotted along the road to Cambrin, where they expected to meet the Prince, but he had retired the previous day to La Bassée, having been misinformed that the enemy would cross the Lys at



Estaires. Misled by this information the Prince had withdrawn his forces from Béthune and had concentrated between Vieille Chapelle and Laventie':

—an historical note, the general accuracy of which may be verified by the detailed account of these days reproduced by the Duc d'Aumale in his *Histoire des Princes de Condé*. Or take a passage of pure fiction, an earlier adventure when the Musketeers were riding down Miladi to her doom. From Béthune, where they had found the headsman, they rode through the village of Festubert, past the woods of Richebourg to Herlies. Just beyond Fromelles a storm burst, and a little further, by a lightning flash, they caught sight of the village of Erquinghem, and a few hours later the moon, rising behind Armen-tières, lit up the scene of the execution on the bank of the Lys. How these passages call to memory the dark days of the first period of the war, when British people were less accustomed to tragedy than now, and when every week one heard from mourners how the hope of their house had fallen at one of these places, which till then had seemed to be mere names belonging to the domain of romance.

Although Dumas' reinless fancy drove him into the most dazzling inaccuracies that ever

beguiled a reader in the fascinating pursuit of history in his pages, he is a trustworthy geographical guide in his own north-east (we shall pass Villers-Cotterets, his birthplace, farther on our way) and the itineraries quoted will stand the test of verification with one of our large-scale military maps. But like many other masters of romance, in writing one chapter he sometimes forgot what he had set down in another. This gave rise to a little misunderstanding in the second year of the war. A young British officer, who had known his Dumas from his early childhood in France, scrupulous not to name in his letters the places where he was campaigning, invented with a correspondent, who also knew his Dumas, a topographical code founded on the epic of the Musketeers. One day a letter came which seemed to announce secret news of glorious importance, for it said, 'We have passed through *la ville du bourreau*.' Now when Miladi was confronted with her executioner by the side of the Lys she recognised him with the cry : 'Le bourreau de Lille.' Our newspapers, for some futile reason, were not then allowed to mention the localities of either our successes or reverses, so for a few hours the recipient of the letter believed

that we had retaken Lille. It was the fault of 'Papa Dumas.' Having in the first book of his trilogy sent his heroes to Béthune to find the 'bourreau de Lille,' when writing *Vingt Ans Après*, he called that ill-fated official 'bourreau de Béthune.' It was this the young officer had in mind, for it was only through Béthune that our troops had passed on their way to the Somme. Perhaps Dumas might have explained that the red-mantled executioner performed the function of what the French clergy call *binage* when a curé has to officiate in two different parishes. Béthune survived three and a half years of intermittent bombardment, and in the intervals was a picturesque halting-place for thousands of British troops beneath the shadow of its belfry, five centuries old. But in five days of the spring of 1918, the Germans razed it to the ground—the fate of La Bassée and of many another place in the Dumas country.

'From Béthune to Arras an admirable gravel road,' wrote Arthur Young in 1788, the year before the Revolution; and the old capital of Artois witnessed as many of its grimmest scenes as any provincial city in France. After centuries of warfare Arras enjoyed a period of relative

quiet. In 1749 the unification of its area, governed by rival civic and ecclesiastical authorities, benefited the city and brought prosperity to the local Bar, a leader of which had a son born in 1759, Maximilien Robespierre, who was sent to the Collège Louis le Grand, at Paris. There Cardinal de Rohan, who was Abbot of Saint Vaast at Arras, noticed the clever youth and extended his favour to a young brother (Augustin Bon-Joseph were his very Christian names)—who finally died with his elder on the same scaffold in 1794. Maximilien did so well at the local Bar that the Bishop of Arras gave him a judgeship, but his sensitive objection to the penalty of death, which the court had power to inflict, made him resign it. In the Constituent Assembly he was deputy for Arras, but in the Convention he and his brother were members for Paris. So this *par nobile fratrum* had less to do with the Revolution in their native place than an active fellow-townsmen, Joseph Lebon. The Robespierres were only protégés of the Church. Lebon, born at Arras in 1765, was a priest—an Oratorian father, and his declension was rapid, as he was not ordained until after the Revolution, at Christmas 1789. He soon got into trouble with his Order, but the Civil Consti-



tution of the clergy having been voted by the Assembly he took the required oaths and became a *vicaire* at the great abbey-church of Saint Vaast. After the fall of the monarchy he was elected in September 1792 by his fellow-citizens deputy to the Convention and mayor of Arras. Two months later he married Elizabeth Regnies—his cousin Mimie—and it was the first marriage of a priest and the first civil marriage celebrated in the new department of Pas-de-Calais. A child was born in Paris just when the Queen was passing, almost under their windows, to the scaffold, on October 16, 1793. Then he was sent by the Convention on a mission to his native district, and installed himself at Arras in an old house in the rue Saint Maurice, which with its sixteenth-century tower was standing before the war. There he surrounded himself with a committee of incorruptible republicans, of whom six were old Oratorians, and day by day men, women, and children of Arras were sent by the score to the guillotine. It was set up near the Petite Place, close to Robespierre's house and opposite the theatre, the balcony of which was reserved for the pro-consul, in gorgeous uniform, accompanied by Mimie and their courtiers, and it was so near the scaffold



that Lebon, who knew all his victims, used to insult them by name as they went to their deaths. Then Mimie and her court retired to supper and feasted joyously while Arras was as a plague-stricken city. In May 1794 Lebon and his band transported the Terror to Cambrai, where amid similar scenes of licence and butchery news from Paris put an end to the festivity while at its height. On 11 Thermidor it was reported that Robespierre, the chief citizen of Arras, was dead. The Terror was over ; France woke up from its nightmare imposed by a mad minority, and Lebon was guillotined at Amiens amid the unanimous joy of Picardy and Artois.

Before the war nothing was less suggestive of revolutionary fury than the aspect of the immense Grande Place and the Petite Place at Arras—unique examples of Flemish renaissance architecture, arcaded below and gabled above, monuments of civic and commercial prosperity, in spite of a siege or two which had failed to deface them. Until the Germans came back to Arras in 1918 the damage done to these squares was said to be not irreparable ; but now the delicate carving and sculpture on the house-fronts has gone for ever. The fine hôtel de ville had been much restored fifty years ago, so it

perhaps may rise again not changed beyond recognition ; but the ancient bells in the belfry are missing, as are the municipal archives of high historical value. The cathedral was hopelessly smashed early in the war. But it was a modern building, begun in the reign of Louis xv. and completed only in the last century. It was the restored church of the Abbey of Saint Vaast, where Lebon officiated before he became a Terrorist. The old cathedral, which was magnificent, was sold during the Revolution and then wantonly demolished under the Empire and the Restoration, when it might easily have been re-established in its former splendour. The modern cathedral contained among its relics the head of Saint James the Great, which puzzled pilgrims who had visited Santiago de Compostella, and the more authentic blood-stained rochet of Thomas à Becket, which it may be hoped has not fallen into German hands.

From Arras, the capital of the Pas-de-Calais, it is a drive of about twenty miles to Cambrai in the Nord, the metropolitan see of both departments. Arras was the only suffragan of Cambrai until the eve of the war, when at the end of 1913 a new diocese of Lille was formed, including the arrondissements of Dunkirk and Hazebrouck.

It was the first see erected in France since the rupture of the Concordat. But the Germans occupied the new episcopal city before its first anniversary, so there has been no opportunity of watching the working of an unconcordatory diocese. One of its chief towns, Hazebrouck, has had for its deputy and mayor the Abbé Lemire, whose name is well known in France, on account of his strong republicanism, which brought him into conflict with his ecclesiastical superiors. He was harshly treated by the Archbishop of Cambrai, who having owed his first episcopal appointment to the deputy for Hazebrouck, forbade the abbé to take his seat in a later parliament. The archbishop died, after resigning his see, the week before war was declared, when there disappeared in the great tumult many a polemical question which until then had divided Frenchmen.

The archbishopric of Cambrai, though not of ancient foundation, has a popular tradition, perhaps greater than that of any other diocese in France, owing to Fénelon, who was archbishop from 1694 to 1715, years of vicissitude in which he incurred the censure both of the King and of the Pope—a combination rarely in accord under Louis XIV. Exiled from the Court, which found

in *Télémaque* satirical allusions not pleasing to courtiers, he spent the rest of his life at Cambrai. There, after engaging in more than one theological controversy, he finally devoted his life to good works, turning his palace into a hospital for officers wounded at Malplaquet, and stripping himself of his possessions to succour the distress caused in the diocese by the war. Before the Germans came to Cambrai the gateway of the old palace remained as a relic of the house where he finished *Télémaque*, which, written partly for the instruction of his pupil the Duc de Bourgogne, and partly for his own recreation, is, as Voltaire said, vastly superior to his serious works on Quietism and on other controversial subjects. The cathedral in which he ministered was destroyed at the Revolution, and was replaced by a church quite unworthy of its metropolitan position. A touching incident occurred at Cambrai in 1702 when the Duc de Bourgogne passed through on his way to the army. The King, his grandfather, had forbidden Saumery, the officer in attendance, to allow the young prince to speak to his old tutor, if he met him. Fénelon was waiting to salute his pupil at the post-house where horses were changed. Saumery, 'with an air of authority which scandalised



every one,' repeated the King's orders to the Prince, who leaping from the carriage tenderly embraced the Archbishop, whispering in his ear words that were not overheard. He died in 1712, the year after he became dauphin, three years before the deaths of Louis XIV. and of Fénelon ; so it was never in his power to undo his grandfather's injustice.

From Cambrai there runs in a south-westerly direction one of those *routes nationales*, which were the pride of French administration. It goes in a straight line through Bapaume and Albert to Amiens, a distance of about fifty miles, and there is no battle-worn road in France of more tragic reminiscence in British homes. For near it, on either side, there are literally hundreds of shattered villages and farms and woods, the names of which indicate places where young lives, from every part of our Empire, came to an end. We shall return to this desolated region ; so now we will follow the road as far as Albert, a little town on the Ancre, a tributary of the Somme, which here quickens its sluggish course in a series of cascades. It was a red-brick town, a cheerful resting-place for our troops, even after one bombardment. Before the Germans returned this way in 1918, it struck the British



soldier's eye as one of the few places in the Somme valley where a number of buildings had managed to remain erect. Albert no longer gives this impression. Twice invaded and twice delivered, it is a town no more, nor even the ruin of a town, but a mournful heap of rubble. A gilded statue of the Blessed Virgin on the church-tower was displaced by the first German bombardment. As it hung suspended by its feet the too hopeful inhabitants vowed that it would not fall until the war was won. Unhappily the enemy, before that, smashed the tower to atoms, and the Vierge d'Or has lost her chance of becoming a rival to the miraculous statue which stood within the church of Notre Dame de Brébières, patroness of shepherds—an object of pilgrimage since the thirteenth century, when the town, like the river, was called Ancre. It owes its name of Albert to a most romantic history. In the childhood of Louis XIII., his mother Marie de Médicis fell under the influence of her foster-sister, Léonora Galigai, an Italian of humble origin, who became her waiting-woman and married one of the Florentines about the court, Concino Concini, who well calculated the advantage of being the partner of the Queen's favourite. When Henri IV. died in 1610 the influence of the

couple had no bounds over the Queen-Mother, who gave Concini the marquisate of Ancre and made him a Marshal of France. Though he had never seen a battle he became known as the Maréchal d'Ancre. In 1617 Louis XIII., only sixteen years old, resented the tyranny of these adventurers, who were presuming to rule France. In his own suite was a poor gentleman of Provence, twenty years older than he, Charles d'Albert, sieur de Luynes, who was King's falconer, and to him Louis confided his desire to be rid of the interloper. D'Albert was too cautious to undertake the task of removing him and handed it over to the Marquis de Vitry, a noted duellist, who one day, when Concini was entering the Louvre, ordered the guards to shoot him. It was a turning-point in the history of France. Paris acclaimed the hitherto unknown boy-King, the Queen-Mother was exiled to Blois, and most of the rewards of Vitry's *coup d'état* fell to Charles d'Albert, including the fortune of Léonora, who was executed, and the Marquisate of Ancre, to which he gave his name of Albert. This is why the town, where British soldiers gazed with curiosity on the dislocated Virgin, is called Albert. The prodigious fortune of its sponsor did not end there. The King created

him Constable of France and Duc de Luynes, one of the few ducal titles of the old monarchy which still authentically survives. Unluckily for him he married one of the most amazing women who ever had a share in French history, Marie de Rohan, and this probably hastened his end. He died in 1621 after brief enjoyment of his dazzling success, leaving his widow, who became Duchesse de Chevreuse, to fill with her name and intrigues the subsequent half century.

Between Albert and Amiens, near the junction of the Ancre with the Somme, is Corbie, another little town of which hosts of British soldiers have pleasant recollections, as of a place where they billeted when it was outside the zone of bloodshed and desolation. Von Kluck passed through in 1914, but his hordes left the place without doing much damage. There was a magnificent abbey-church, which was pillaged at the Revolution and then ruthlessly mutilated by architects ; so whatever its fate at the hands of the Germans the mischief was already half done. Corbie played an important part at a critical moment in the Thirty Years' War when, then, as in the late war, the Germans had invaded Picardy, crossing the Somme and putting Paris in danger. They then came, 18,000 strong, in the train of their allies the

Spaniards, and took the town of Corbie. This was in 1636, and Louis XIII. with his minister Richelieu hastened to the front to encourage the French army. The King had his quarters at Demuin, a hamlet south of the railway between Amiens and Chaulnes, where once stood Villers-Bretonneux, a little industrial town, now a great burial-place of our gallant Anzacs, who died there in larger numbers than on any other battlefield, except the fatal Thracian Peninsula, where they won their immortal name. The Cardinal stayed at Amiens, where he narrowly escaped assassination. However, Corbie was retaken and France was delivered from a great peril. In the correspondence preserved at Chantilly of Henri de Bourbon, Prince de Condé (father of the Great Condé), who was then campaigning in Burgundy, there are letters concerning the invasion of Picardy which might have been written the other day but for their spelling. One from his wife in Paris begins : ' Mon cher cœur, nous sommes si alarmés ici qu'il ne se peult davantage, par ce que les ennemis on pasé la riviere de Some à coté de Bray ' ; and another announces : ' ils ont pris en passant Mondidier et Roye, et le gros de l'armée assiège Corbie : l'effroi est grand partout ; ils bruslent et pillent tout.' The history



of this episode happily repeated itself in its final result. For not only was the enemy driven back across the frontiers, but those frontiers were extended to include Alsace and Lorraine as well as Artois ; so that Richelieu, the greatest minister that ever served a king, when he died, six years after the campaign on the Somme, left France victorious and permanently prosperous.

The fate of Amiens was long in the balance. Happily little harm was done to the noble church, by some accounted the most beautiful and imposing in Christendom, more perfect in its architecture even than the glorious cathedral of Reims, whose ruins are now a monument of German barbarism. To one who knows Notre Dame d'Amiens better perhaps than any of the seventy French cathedrals he has visited, it would be tempting to linger in the precinct of this marvellous church, were there not other parts of the department of the Somme still to be surveyed. But first the line traced for our itinerary will take us in a south-easterly direction into the Oise and the Aisne, where every bloodstained mile is reminiscent of the historical past.

There is no woodland scene in France more



beautiful than the forest of Compiègne, which early in the war was associated in English hearts with a rare episode in the grim, underground war of trenches, as it was here that British cavalry had the chance, not often repeated, of charging the enemy in the open. As one drove or rode over grass-rides past Pierrefonds, rising like a fairy-palace among the trees, to Villers-Cotterets, or northward towards Noyon, one never thought that such pleasant landscapes, which had lost all trace of ancient battles, would one day be dotted with little crosses, marking the resting-places of brave young Englishmen who were the light and joy of their distant homes—lying side by side with gallant French soldiers, united in fraternal sleep never anticipated by the warriors of old who passed this way, from Joan of Arc to Napoleon.

Noyon became proverbial early in the war owing to M. Clemenceau's constant warning to optimists while it was occupied by the enemy sixty miles from Paris—'Et les Allemands sont toujours à Noyon.' When the Germans came back for the last time the venerable statesman who sounded the alarm had happily become Prime Minister, called to that high post, sometimes unworthily held, by the acclama-

tion which followed his indictment of agents of the enemy, who though a miserable minority had found their way to ministerial office. Noyon, in the spring-time embowered in fruit blossom, did not suggest the austere tradition of Calvin, who was born there, the son of an ecclesiastical lawyer, descended from a race of bargemen who got their living on the Oise. Long before the Reformation, nearly a thousand years ago, the Île de France was the cradle of the French monarchy and in the cathedral of Noyon, Hugues Capet was anointed first King of France. It was two centuries later that the prince-bishops built the exquisite church which remained a cathedral until the Revolution. It was only in September 1918 that the Germans destroyed this priceless monument in their spiteful fury at the approach of total defeat, demolishing every house in the little city, from the Renaissance hôtel de ville to the birth-place of Calvin.

There was a very human interest attaching to the ancient church in the memory of its bishop under Louis XIV., François de Clermont-Tonnerre, who, Saint Simon says, was the vainest man that ever lived. It was he who referred to the Pope as 'Monsieur de Rome'—bishops in those days

not being 'monsignorised,' to adapt Voltaire's term, Bossuet being Monsieur de Meaux, Fénelon Monsieur de Cambrai. His putting the Supreme Pontiff on the level of other diocesans was said to be due less to his Gallicanism than to his pride. It was so impenetrable that for his reception at the French Academy some courtiers arranged with Caumartin, afterwards Bishop of Blois, who received him, to deliver a discourse of burlesque flattery, and M. de Noyon swallowed it. The censorious diarist makes short work of his pride of birth, declaring that he was of '*aucune naissance*.'

The vanity of Alexandre Dumas was of a more genial order. His birthplace, Villers-Cotterets, in the Aisne, is between Compiègne and Soissons—that much suffering city, with its exquisitely proportioned cathedral, which experts put in the first rank of French churches, and of which the Germans have not left much standing. Whenever there has been fighting in France Soissons has had its share, and even the domestic Revolution of July brought it into grave peril. At least so said Dumas one winter evening in 1856, when he was discoursing in the salon of Princesse Mathilde: 'In 1830 I myself unaided took the town of Soissons, just by

threatening to blow out the brains of the Commandant.' The père Dumas, with his warm African blood, had more of the aggrandising temperament of his Gascon heroes than that of a native of the borderland of Picardy. Yet he loved that country. In the touching *Lettre à mon père*, which Dumas fils wrote as a preface to Maurice Leloir's fine illustrated edition of the *Mousquetaires*, the brilliant inheritor of some of his genius describes how his father died at Dieppe in the dark winter of 1870, saddened because the Germans then, as in our time, were soiling with their presence his beloved native region, and how when they had gone the son performed the pious duty bequeathed to him of laying the body to rest beneath the great trees in the cemetery of Villers-Cotterets, between the graves of his parents. It is, or used to be, a bright characteristic French country town, and the tomb of the great romancer, who claimed our own Walter Scott as his ancestor, who, as he said, 'showed him the way,' is a pleasanter place of pilgrimage than the remains of the Château of Villers-Cotterets, raised by the most sumptuous of royal builders, François I., which is now degraded to the base uses of a depot of mendicity.



A dozen historical places round the forest of Compiègne, witnesses of the war, might be mentioned. There is Senlis, the twin city of Noyon, of identical size. Both were episcopal sees till 1791, and both assisted at the birth of the French monarchy when, before his coronation at Noyon, the first of the Capets was elected king by the feudal assembly at Senlis. From that time throughout the annals of France, the name of Senlis constantly recurs as a place of pleasing charm intimately associated with the development of the nation which sprang from the monarchy. Its amenity was such that under Louis XIV. there was much rivalry for its governorship. 'Monsieur le Prince muguettoit fort le gouvernement de Senlis,' wrote Saint Simon when the desirable post was given to his own father. This smiling little town was an early victim of the Huns in 1914, when they mutilated its buildings and murdered the mayor, with other notable citizens.

The historic and romantic associations of Compiègne are so abundant, that at the risk of giving disproportionate space to one locality, several of them may be cited as an example of the continued richness in reminiscence of one spot of French soil, from century to century.



We need not go back to the Renaissance or the Middle Ages, though Joan of Arc's tower tempts us to discuss the everlasting question whether Cauchon, Bishop of Beauvais (in which diocese Compiègne still stands), or the Burgundians, or the English are most to blame for her fate. We will go back no further than the period when French was already spoken and written in all its perfection.

In 1698 Louis XIV. decreed a superb camp at Compiègne. It was the year after the Peace of Ryswick and the marriage of the King's grandson and heir, the Duc de Bourgogne, who had been Fénelon's pupil, and was to be the father of Louis XV. So peace on earth having been proclaimed, which lasted for nearly five years, Louis le Grand commanded this military pageant to give the son of the Dauphin a little insight into the art of war. *Militaris institutio Ducis Burgundiae* was the inscription on the medal commemorating the Camp. That was the official reason for the martial display. But Saint Simon declares that the King's notion was to offer a 'superb spectacle' to Mme de Maintenon ; and in so doing he presented a spectacle of another sort to the army, the court, the ambassadors, and to the vast throng which came from all parts

to crowd the countryside. It so impressed the diarist that he wrote : ' If I had to depict the scene forty years hence, it would be as fresh in my memory as to-day.' For there was the favourite, aged sixty-three, in her sedan-chair in the highest place of honour, the Duchesse de Bourgogne seated on the pole and the King standing bareheaded behind, with the ladies of the Court making circle around. It was the apotheosis of Françoise d'Aubigné, Veuve Scarron, and was held to be the recognition of her alleged secret marriage to the King soon after the Queen's death fifteen years before.

Twelve years after the Camp at Compiègne, in 1710, the Duc de Bourgogne had a son, whose father, grandfather, and great-grandfather died in the next five years ; so he came to the throne as Louis xv., at the age of five. It was in 1810, just a hundred years after his birth, that near Compiègne was set up another camp, by a monarch more powerful for a brief moment than Louis le Grand himself. Napoleon, who was born a subject of Louis xv., was at the height of his glory. Sixteen years before, at the date of the events we have noted at Arras, he was a needy young Corsican officer, glad of the patronage of the Robespierre brothers. Now he was

master of the European continent, and his camp near Compiègne was in honour of 'the daughter of the Cæsars,' whom he had never seen, and who was coming to him as a bride. The daughter of the Emperor of Austria was already Napoleon's lawful wife, he having married her by proxy at Vienna, the ring being placed on her finger by her kinsman the Archduke Charles, whom her husband had defeated the previous summer at Wagram, near the gates of the Austrian capital. Marshal Berthier was sent to escort her to France, and he had been created Prince de Wagram, as though to emphasise the fact that the daughter of Francis II. was delivered to Napoleon as a trophy of war. On the road from Compiègne to Soissons the camp was pitched for the first interview of their Majesties. There was one tent for Napoleon and his suite, another for the young Empress (she was in her eighteenth year), and a third for the ceremonial meeting of the bridal pair, before their solemn procession to the palace, where the bride was to be left while the Emperor was to retire to the Chancellerie until the religious ceremony the next day. All this was according to the strict etiquette of Courts, which in theory Napoleon affected. But it was all forgotten in a moment, when on March 28 an express arrived

with the news that Marie Louise had passed through Vitry in the Marne on her way to Soissons. In defiance of the protocol, Napoleon ordered a carriage and four and galloped to meet his bride far beyond Soissons. At Courcelles he met her, leaped into her carriage, and embracing her, gave the order to drive full speed to Compiègne, where without solemn ceremony they entered the château, which Napoleon did not leave that night.

Less than four years later, in March 1814, Napoleon and Marie Louise had parted for ever, and he was at Courcelles again. It was the campaign of France in which Napoleon's genius rose to its height, where he won battle after battle against the armies of three nations, those of his father-in-law, of Russia, and of Prussia, until overwhelmed by numbers and driven to his abdication at Fontainebleau. He was at Fismes, where Marie Louise had changed horses just before he surprised her at Courcelles, when he heard of the capitulation of Soissons, which Thiers described as 'the most fatal event in our history except Waterloo.' The name of the young Empress is not associated with the glories of Napoleon. Yet in this last struggle there was an army of young conscripts which gave it a



military tradition, as these poor children, torn from their homes to fight without training, were known as the 'Marie-Louises.' We shall return to this area so fateful for France and for Napoleon, as it is traversed by the blood-stained way called the 'Chemin des Dames,' the scene of many a desperate combat in the recent war.

Forty years after the marriage fêtes at Compiègne another Napoleon was ruling France. On the 2nd of December 1852, the Prince-President became Emperor of the French, and three weeks later Viel Castel (whose journal can be cited only when he is not calumnious) wrote : 'The Court is at Compiègne hunting, dancing, and amusing itself, and the Emperor is in love with Mlle de Montijo, the beautiful and gracious Spaniard whose sister married the Duc d'Albe.' So not much time was lost in adorning the Second Empire with a Court, and when a month later Napoleon III. made the beautiful Spaniard his Empress, the somewhat chilly palace warmed with a gaiety it never knew before or since. Within these walls, reconstructed at a bad period under Louis xv., the politics of Europe were often settled and unsettled during the Second Empire, as ambassadors and less official envoys from foreign Courts paid long visits here, with better



opportunity for familiar conferences with the enigmatic Napoleon III. than at the Tuileries or Saint-Cloud. But the domestic fame of Compiègne during his reign arose from the festivities of a pleasure-loving court. The private theatricals were the talk of the capitals of Europe. The ladies of the Court, whom Winterhalter portrayed, were led in their revels by Mme de Metternich, the Austrian Ambassadors, who was as witty as they were beautiful. In 1865, before Sadowa and Queretaro had cast their shadows on the dynasty, the annual travesty, written by M. de Massa, the Court playwright, was called *Les Commentaires de César*, after the book which the sovereign had recently published. In honour of a minor entente with England then in vogue, the parts of Britannia and of La Belle France were played by two lovely women, who retained traces of their beauty well into the twentieth century. Another of that joyous troop, who long survived, was that amazing soldier, Galliffet, between two campaigns in Mexico, just five years before his heroic adventure by the cavalry on the field of Sedan. Viollet-le-Duc acted as the prompter in the intervals of superintending the restoration of Pierrefonds, which was a present from the

Emperor to his beautiful consort, who in England has survived for half a century the gaieties of Compiègne.

The palace remained closed as a residence for thirty years. Republican simplicity is held to be inconsistent with brilliant fêtes, and the presidents who have used the ancient appanages of the Crown, chiefly for shooting parties, have preferred Fontainebleau and Rambouillet. In 1901 a second visit to France of the Tsar and Tsarina was announced as a new friendly incident in the ill-starred Franco-Russian alliance, which in the end precipitated the opening day of the universal war. After much nervous hesitation the Russian sovereigns decided to go to Compiègne, leaving it uncertain whether they would visit Paris. So at enormous expense and trouble the State apartments were prepared, the cold walls of the château being brightened with the priceless Savonnerie tapestries which Louis XIV. ordered for Versailles, while a monumental bed of Napoleon I. was set up for the Tsar. Among the rare survivors who saw the Imperial Court at Compiègne is M. Xavier Paoli, the last of those Corsicans, whose racial loyalty to the Bonapartes caused Napoleon III. to choose them for the chief posts at the Prefecture of Police.

Under the Republic every sovereign who visited France was put in charge of M. Paoli, and he is especially associated with Queen Victoria, whose white-horsed landau, year after year, on many a road in southern France, used daily to be seen followed by the little carriage in which the faithful Paoli kept guard. The Queen was so mindful of his faithful services that when she was buried the Corsican commissary was the only foreigner not of royal or diplomatic rank invited to St. George's Chapel. But all his royal missions put together gave him less anxiety than the Russians' three days at Compiègne. On the surface there were cordial welcome and rejoicing. The Comédie-Française performed in the theatre built for the Imperial amateurs, and the graceful *doyenne* Mme Bartet recited Edmond Rostand's audacious 'Oh ! oh ! c'est une Impératrice'—while the cellars below were full of armed men, and behind every shrub in the private grounds were soldiers with loaded rifles. A special train was ready night and day in the Compiègne station, with the steam up, to take the sovereigns to the capital, but finally they decided that they would not show themselves to the good people of Paris. The reason was that they were forbidden to go there by a

charlatan called 'Philippe,' who actually followed them to Compiègne, where he was taken for an anarchist, arrested and detained till his importance was revealed. He for the moment was the reigning adventurer at the Russian Court and a predecessor of Raspoutine, from the consequences of whose influence Russia and Europe will never recover.

People often wonder whether the prestige of a Court casts upon incidents a romantic or interesting glamour which would not be perceptible amid more commonplace surroundings. At Louis XIV.'s camp at Compiègne there was an incident which both Saint-Simon and Dangeau thought worth while to relate in their picturesque language. It was known as the *Histoire de Chapeaux*, and there was an *Histoire de Chapeaux* at Compiègne in the presidential circle during the Tsar's visit, which may be compared with it. The story of 1698 was of a practical joke played by the Duc de Lauzun on the Comte de Tessé, a colonel of dragoons, by assuring him that at the great parade the King would expect him to wear a *chapeau gris*, which he thereupon sent for to Paris, and appeared before the astonished Louis XIV. and the amused courtiers in a large grey hat adorned with a long black feather and



a huge cockade—and many pages of the two great diarists are filled with the mirth and witticisms which ensued, beginning with his Majesty's 'Where the devil did you get that hat?'—a rare recorded instance of Le Roi Soleil descending to the colloquial prose of humanity. The modern Histoire de Chapeaux at Compiègne concerns the other sex. Before the arrival of the Russian sovereigns in 1901 the wives of the ministers were invited to *déjeuner* early in the day with Madame la Présidente. In French circles which have no pretension to fashion, it is the practice of ladies when they go out to lunch to remove their hats before sitting down. In that section of society which claims to be the arbiter of elegance, and which imports its modes from England, the contrary custom prevails. Among the guests at this semi-official meal was a French ambadress of the highest *ton*, who alone retained her hat. Her excellency's action, to the *femmes de ministres* who had uncovered, seemed a presumption of superiority. On the eve of welcoming an empress they were in no mood to accept a lesson in fashionable propriety, and they took counsel together how they might avenge themselves. They decided to demand the head of the Ambassador, and sure enough he was



removed from his post on account of this Republican *Histoire de Chapeaux* at the Château of Compiègne.

When the foregoing pages were written, it was little thought that the forest of Compiègne would add to its long series of historic events the concluding scene of our great war. On a November morning a train stopped on the railway line which crosses the woodland. When the lowered blinds of the carriages were raised, the travellers saw that they were in the midst of a forest, bright with autumnal tints, nowhere so brilliant as on the foliage of the Île de France. They were the German delegates, brought like prisoners to accept the conditions of the Armistice from Marshal Foch and Admiral Rosslyn Wemyss. The humbled envoys were not permitted to enter the town, or to see the château, which, it is said, was spared from bombardment because the Kaiser had intended it to be the residence of the Crown Prince. So the Armistice was signed in a railway saloon, a sight which must have amazed the ghosts of Louis XIV. and Napoleon, if in their familiar haunts they were celebrating the defeat of Germany.

## PART II

THE wealth of historic associations throughout the war-zone makes it necessary to select a very small proportion of them for exposition. Certain correspondents, who were sufficiently interested in the first part of this study (when a portion of it was published in a Review) to write about it to the author, suggested that if reminiscences had to be omitted for reasons of space it would be better in the remaining pages to omit those referring to far-off times and to give the preference to *choses vues*, and to incidents the relation of which had come direct from the lips of witnesses or contemporaries. The latter category will take us back over a long space of time ; for it is not many years ago that there were old people alive in France who loved to talk about their recollections of the Napoleonic period. Such was an aged canon of Saint Dié, that little cathedral town in the Vosges, a few miles from the frontier of Alsace, which overlooks a lovely

panorama of mountain country ravished from France, but now happily restored. In 1890 the old priest, when questioned about the invasion of 1870, declared that the invasion which was freshest in his memory was that of 1814. The remainder of these pages, then, with an occasional glance at the distant past, will deal chiefly with incidents which are of recent date or were within the memory of people living not many years ago.

On September 5, 1914, two days after the departure of the government of the Republic from Paris to Bordeaux, the French official *communiqué* announced that 'les troupes ennemies ont évacué la région Compiègne-Senlis.' By this time the Germans had advanced so far south as to be within a march of Paris, and on the boulevards was heard the sound of the guns in the decisive battle of the Marne. This is not the place to tell of the great part we took in winning that victory. The story of how our little army joined with the French in keeping the Germans from once more investing the beautiful capital ought to be familiar to us all. The small British forces, the last of our old standing army, were of such admirable quality

that they succeeded in forming with the French an impassable barrier on the east of Paris, until the danger was conjured and the Germans were in retreat.

It was not far from Meaux that the enemy came nearest to the capital, and around that city furious battles were fought. In the words of one of our soldiers' songs : ' We got them on the go at a little place called Meaux.' There is no town in the Île de France fuller of historical associations. Before the war there stood on the terrace of the modern hôtel de ville a venerable antiquity—a mortar, one of the first ever made, taken from the English near Meaux in the Hundred Years' War, five centuries ago. But the most vivid tradition of Meaux is of a later date, when Bossuet, already a bishop, was translated in 1681 to that see, over which he presided for twenty-three years. In the fine cathedral, where a monument marks his resting-place, the anniversary of the battle of the Marne was celebrated each year till the war ended by a solemn Mass, sung by a priest who served in the French army as a combatant officer. The patriotic spectacle of a priest coming from the battlefield to officiate at the high altar of the church which was the scene of the eloquent pastorate of the

Eagle of Meaux gives cause for reflection. The submission of the French clergy to military service, enacted before the separation of Church and State, was the work of the anti-clericals, and was opposed by the episcopate and by Catholics generally. When the war came the anti-clerical cry of '*Les curés sac au dos*' had an effect on the nation which the military service of the clergy in peace-time had failed to produce, and which the adversaries of the Church had not anticipated. The spectacle of seminarists and priests fighting in the ordinary ranks of the army and dying for France gave to the clergy a popularity which, except in certain regions, they had not enjoyed under the Third Republic. It was confidently predicted that when peace was restored and when the anti-clericals could no longer reproach the clergy with being a caste enjoying the invidious privilege of exemption from taking part in the national defence, the curés and vicaires who had fallen in battle would be remembered in their parishes as martyrs, and those who returned from the war to resume their ministry would be respected as heroes. The prospect perturbed the minds of the anti-clericals, who dreaded a religious revival. Had the French episcopate been inspired with the national spirit of Bossuet the



anti-clericals might have been at a loss for arguments to discourage such a revival. But the enemies of the Church in France, always indefatigable, had an ally in the Vatican. From the moment when the Austrian cardinal at the Conclave of 1903 vetoed the election to the papacy of Rampolla, who represented a policy conciliatory to France, the Vatican has been considered, rightly or wrongly, as an Austro-German agency. But for Rampolla's defeat, it is probable that that admirable instrument, the Concordat, would not have been abrogated, the rupture of which has removed the last trace of Gallicanism from the French episcopate. The policy of the new Pope, elected in the first weeks of the war, justly or unjustly, persuaded many spectators of the European tumult who have no love for anti-clericalism, that the Vatican worked for the victory of Germany and Austria and the abasement of France, of Italy, and of England. The position of the French bishops was one of painful difficulty. Of patriotism beyond reproach, they are always compelled by their dependence on the Holy See to express their loyalty to it, a dilemma of which the anti-clericals are never slow to take advantage. The sacrifice of life and limb and health made by

thousands of the younger clergy had its effect counteracted by the allegation that the clergy is a body primarily owing allegiance to a power which in the European conflict was hostile to France. Reflections such as these are inspired by the sight of a soldier-priest, who won military promotion while fighting for a cause not favoured by Rome, officiating at the altar by the pulpit of Bossuet, the greatest churchman ever born of France, the eldest daughter of the Church. It was here at Meaux that the champion of Gallican liberty, the opponent of the influence of Rome in any but the spiritual domain, preached week after week with that eloquent tongue which neither old age nor suffering could silence. It was here that he died without attaining the Cardinal's hat, which Rome denied to the most illustrious of the French episcopate of all time.

The Brie, of which Meaux is the principal town, is a country full of charm from early spring to late autumn. It is a region of great forests, most of them belonging to the State, of ancient market-towns and villages, of pleasant châteaux, of farms which supply the needs of Paris, and, in the direction of Champagne, of vineyards covering the hillsides. It looked as though the peaceful landscape had never been disturbed by war and

devastation. Yet its fate in 1914 was no new experience for the region flanking the capital on the east. The name of every town and village in it recalls some important or romantic incident in peace or in war. There is Jouarre, for example, with the remains of the abbey between the Grand and the Petit Morin, those tributaries of the Marne which few English people had heard of before they became sadly familiar names in September 1914. Many pages might be written about the Abbess de Jouarre—not the creation of Renan's unseemly fancy, but the real Abbess who vexed the soul of her neighbour Bossuet, and caused him incidentally to write three large volumes.

The battle of the Marne not only saved Paris and Europe: it also disarranged the personal plans of the German Emperor. He had intended to supervise the investiture of the capital, not from Versailles, as his grandfather had done, but from Ferrières, Baron Rothschild's sumptuous château between Meaux and Paris, the amenities of which had been tested by William I., the Crown Prince Frederick, and Bismarck, in 1870. But the armies of England and of France stood in the way, and the Imperial party never got so far west as Ferrières. A fortnight after Sedan, the King

of Prussia, not yet Emperor, with his satellites, left Reims after an agreeable visit at the Archbishop's palace (which his grandson's artillery was to demolish), and on September 15 arrived at Meaux, where he occupied a house on the beautiful promenade which leads towards the cathedral. Here a young English diplomatist was waiting for the Chancellor, Edward Malet, afterwards our accomplished ambassador at Berlin, the bearer of a letter from Lord Lyons, British Ambassador to France, asking Bismarck if he would enter into negotiations with Jules Favre, acting on behalf of the French Provisional Government. The Chancellor assented, but Jules Favre did not appear at Meaux, and on the 19th the party drove over to Ferrières, where they remained for sixteen days. That remarkable house is as unlike a French château as any human habitation can be. It stands four-square on a high terrace, each corner flanked by a tower in the style of the Italian Renaissance overlooking gardens of great beauty. It was built by Baron James de Rothschild, in rivalry, it is said, of Mentmore—the head of the French branch of the famous cosmopolitan firm being determined that he would not be less magnificently housed than his relative in England; and the architect he



employed was not a Frenchman, but Sir Joseph Paxton, the celebrated gardener of the Duke of Devonshire, who designed the Crystal Palace. Within, the house is even more sumptuous than without. The *grande salle*, of the dimensions of a public building, is a treasure-house of pictures and of other priceless objects of art. Here William I. and his band made themselves extremely comfortable after Bismarck, with threats of torture, had persuaded the house-steward to reveal the secrets of the wine-cellar, and hither came the unhappy Jules Favre. He left behind him a tradition inferior to his merits ; for it was his sad lot to sign with M. Thiers the fatal Treaty of Frankfort, after his patriotic vaunt that ' ni un pouce de notre territoire ni une pierre de nos forteresses ' should ever be surrendered. It was to soften the heart of Bismarck on this point that he undertook the humiliating mission to Ferrières. He deserved to be treated with respect. He was older than Bismarck, a most eloquent leader of the Bar, and a member of the French Academy. Yet the Chancellor treated him with that brutality which all who fall into the power of Germans experience. He rejected his overtures but invited him to drink a favourite concoction of the Bismarcks,



—champagne and porter mixed in a goblet and stirred with a red-hot poker. This is not fiction. When fourteen years later Herbert Bismarck was attached to the German Embassy in London, he used to invite his companions to drink the historic mixture which his father offered to Jules Favre. If they did not like it he would tell them in his voice of thunder that they were no better than Jules Favre, comparing him contemptuously with General Sheridan of the U.S.A. Army, who had drank freely of champagne and porter when dining with the Chancellor at Pont-à-Mousson, where he was staying during the fighting around Metz, four days after Herbert Bismarck was wounded in the charge at Mars-la-Tour.

The late Baron Alphonse de Rothschild, the son and successor of James, used to show his guests at Ferrières the visitors' book of 1870, where were inscribed the signatures of William and Frederick, of Bismarck, and Moltke. On one occasion he produced an earlier register of not less historical interest. With the game-book it showed that on November 3, 1865, Bismarck shot the Ferrières covers, with Galliffet and other guns. From the Baron's table that evening he left to catch a train in Paris, which took him to Biarritz and to Napoleon III., whom he completely cajoled

into the calamitous policy of allowing Prussia to crush Austria in 1866. General de Galliffet, one day looking at his signature on the same page as the Chancellor's, ejaculated that if he had only let fly at Bismarck in the covers and prevented his visit to Biarritz, there would have been no Sadowa and no Sedan. It was at Sedan where Bismarck, in the group surrounding King William, which included Moltke, Roon, and 'Billy' Russell, from the eminence at Fresnois, saw Galliffet once again. This time he was leading the forlorn cavalry charge at Floing, after General Margueritte had fallen, which called from the King of Prussia the exclamation: 'O les braves gens!' So William II. would have had quarters full of gratifying reminiscences if British and French troops had not barred the way to Ferrières.

Ten miles nearer to Paris than Ferrières is the village of Sucy-en-Brie, where the Germans came in 1870 and where every preparation was made for their reception in 1914. The village has remained unchanged since the Revolution, though so near to Paris that a fine panorama of its domes and spires is seen from a terrace by the churchyard—one of those wonderful *horizons de la banlieue de Paris* of which the outskirts of London

have no counterpart. Sucy stands on a high hill, while the little railway line which serves it is far beneath in the valley ; so it has retained its primitive aspect. It is a *petit pays*, where fine châteaux abound. The Château de Sucy, a noble example of the architecture of Louis XIII., is better known to the writer of these pages than any country house in France. On the way down the hill is the pretty place where Madame de Sévigné wrote her earliest letters. Near the banks of the Marne is Grandval, which became famous when Baron d'Holbach entertained there Diderot and the Encyclopædists. On the heights, just beyond the park of the château, is Haute Maison, where the late Ludovic Halévy, most charming of neighbours, used to spend his summers. One day in the library of the château he took from a shelf a volume of Thiers' *Empire*, and found its fly-leaf disfigured with criticisms of the account of the campaign of 1806, scrawled in German—a reminiscence of 1870, when some Würtemburgers were quartered there. Instead of expressing indignation Halévy exclaimed, 'Ils ont bien fait !' He had no love for M. Thiers. Perhaps if the historian of the Consulate and the Empire had lived to welcome as a colleague at the French Academy the author of

*L'Invasion* and of *L'Abbé Constantin*, they might have learned to tolerate one another. A little episode which occurred at Sucy just before the battle of the Marne brings home to people who have never seen a hostile army on their soil the cruel necessities incident on invasion, even in places which the enemy fails to attain. In the grounds of Haute Maison there was a cottage which was lent to members of the family or to friends. Before the Germans were decisively turned away from Paris, a French officer came to tell the occupants of the cottage that it might be necessary to remove the roof or even to demolish the building, as it stood in the line of fire from the fort which was ready to be used to check the advance of the Germans. Fortunately they were pushed eastwards out of range of Sucy-en-Brie.

Our British troops went much further south, to the confines of the forest of Fontainebleau. There, at Melun, the capital of Seine-et-Marne, where General French established his staff, they found a panic-stricken population increased by the inroads of refugees from the invaded territory, and even from Paris. On September 2, 1914, in spite of the presence of the British, Melun had an alarm. The cannon was heard thundering in the direction of Provins, the most southerly point



attained by the enemy, where sad damage was done to the world-famed rose-gardens—which produce the lovely flowers known, by a confusion of nomenclature, as *roses de Provence*. The refugees, pouring into the town laden with their poor chattels, were spreading stories of German horrors, when the cry was raised of ‘*Les Allemands*.’ Consternation soon turned into joy and acclamation. A body of soldiers swinging along the steep streets, as though the retreat from Mons had been a morning’s routemarch, were not Germans, but our glorious Highlanders, whose unfamiliar garb had scared the good people of Melun.

On the way to this southern limit of their advance our troops traversed a country every mile of which is full of historic or romantic interest. They passed near Gros Bois, the château occupied by the Director Barras until the First Consul turned him out and gave it to Moreau, and later to Berthier, whose descendant, the Prince de Wagram, still owns it. It was thither that Josephine came by night veiled, after the Coup d’État of Brumaire, to discuss the new situation with her old lover, the fallen Director. A mile or two further is the site of Cour de France, the posting-house on the roadside where, wandering

on the night of March 30, 1814, Napoleon heard of the capitulation of Paris to the Allies and knowing that his Empire was ended, turned his post-chaise to Fontainebleau, where the final scene took place. Arrived at Melun our soldiers were only 'a quarter of an hour'—so d'Artagnan assured Louis XIV.—from the château of Vaux-le-Vicomte, the superb creation, worthily preserved, of the combined genius of Levau, Le Nôtre, and Le Brun—a remarkable contrast to Paxton's great pleasure house at Ferrières. Built for Fouquet, it was the scene of the regal housewarming with which he hastened the jealousy of the King and his own downfall. At this point we must retrace our steps. On September 10, 1914, the Germans were in full retreat towards the Aisne and the Oise, and thither we must follow them.

On the eve of the great German advance in March 1918, the most violent offensive since the battle of the Marne, the death took place of the most eminent French prelate of our days. His career resembled that of Bossuet, mentioned above, in one particular—he was never made a cardinal, though he saw the sacred purple conferred on many of his episcopal brethren of conspicuously inferior parts. This was Mgr Mignot,

the learned and saintly Archbishop of Albi. As he was a son of the war-zone who died a victim of the war, an outline of his early career may give some idea of how the horrors of invasion come home to many Frenchmen whose duties have called them to reside in parts of France which escaped that calamity. It is rare for a French bishop to be appointed to the diocese of his birth, in which he has usually spent the years of his early ministry ; but they all retain so deep an affection for the scenes of their youth that they seldom fail to pass their vacations among them. Mgr Mignot was born in the Aisne, and his end was hastened by his sorrow for the ravage of his native department, which he had already seen invaded by the Germans in 1870 when he was a young priest. His birthplace was Brancourt-en-Vermendois, an industrial village, between Bohain and Saint Quentin, near the stagnant Canal des Torrents, of fatal remembrance to British, Australian and American soldiers. He was the son of the village school-master, and, when an archbishop, each year he came to celebrate a festal mass in the thirteenth-century church, now a heap of ruins. Five years followed at the Petit Séminaire de Saint Léger at Soissons, an interesting relic of the Middle

Ages, which has shared the fate of the beautiful cathedral. He was ordained in the Episcopal Chapel at Arras, now shattered to pieces. At Notre Dame de Liesse, which lies to the north of the railway from Laon to Reims, he said his first mass in the sumptuous votive church where Louis XIII. and Anne of Austria came to pray for a son, whose name the Huns have reason to remember, as he became Louis XIV. The Germans occupied it after the retreat from Mons, and it is to be hoped that the damage is not irreparable that they did to the Renaissance rood-screen, which the Archbishop would call to mind when showing visitors the much finer jubé in his glorious cathedral at Albi. He became vicaire at Saint Quentin, where we shall arrive presently, and where he saw the milder German invasion of 1870. It was a day of joy in the countryside when his native Brancourt heard that Beaurevoir, only four miles away, was to be his first cure. It was there that Joan of Arc was imprisoned after her capture at Compiègne and nearly died in trying to escape. But henceforth Beaurevoir will be associated with tanks and other instruments of war unknown to the Maid of Orleans. Its name will evermore evoke the grim Beaurevoir Line which



by tenacious sacrifice of precious life we broke through and made sure of victory a month later. There is not much left that the Archbishop would have recognised in his first parish, and at Coucy, his next post, the ruin is even more ruthless, as we shall see presently. Nor does much remain at La Fère, his last cure, near the often bombarded junction of Tergnier, and the last scene of the Napoleonic wars when the French made a plucky resistance against the Prussians in 1815 after Waterloo. Mgr Mignot ended his career in the Aisne as Vicar-General of Soissons, where in the exquisite cathedral, now damaged almost beyond remedy, he was consecrated Bishop of Fréjus.

As the Archbishop lay dying in the old Albigenian capital what visions must have passed before him of his beloved *pays*—the woods around his birthplace battered down ; the modest presbyteries, where he lived as a village curé, shapeless piles of stones ; the beautiful cathedral which he administered shattered by German shells. This was the end of a very notable Frenchman, who, unlike the majority of his class, had a deep love for England and a profound knowledge of our religious life and literature. In the mediæval stronghold, which was his palace at Albi, until

he was wantonly turned out when the Church was disestablished, one might find him sitting among his English books which lined the ancient walls. Had he survived to revisit the devastated Aisne, where he lived and worked for half a century, he would have been touched to see his native soil the cemetery of thousands of young British soldiers, who in defending it mingled their blood with that of their French comrades.

It is not on account of Mgr Mignot's friendship for England that he has been mentioned here. Nor is it in order to draw attention to the havoc done to the churches in France—'la grande pitié des églises de France'—most of which were monuments of historic tradition. For every church that the Germans destroyed, at least a hundred dwellings and other buildings had the same fate. So the destruction of the churches may give an idea, until the full official statistic is published, of the general devastation in any war-ravaged area. The religious architecture in this diocese of Soissons was so remarkable that an artistic monograph was published in 1897 of its ancient churches, with a hundred engravings of the finest specimens—scarcely one of which remains. For in the diocese, which is co-termin-

ous with the department of the Aisne, over one hundred churches have been razed to the ground, and one hundred others gutted. It is therefore a moderate estimate to say that in this one department, of the size of Devonshire, the Germans destroyed 20,000 buildings, including many historic *châteaux* and *hôtels de ville* and many an ancient village of romantic past. The figure is probably much higher. It is officially stated that in the next department, at Amiens alone, 1500 houses were totally and 800 partially destroyed, though the bombardments of Amiens were relatively benign.

The reason for introducing this sketch of the destruction of places familiar to an old resident in the French war-zone is to bring home to us in England what might have been the experience to-day of a Norfolk man or a Devonian, without the protection of the British and the French soldiers who fought in France, and the vigilance of our navy. The East Anglian on his way to find what the Huns had left of his home might have seen King's College Chapel a calcined ruin like Reims, and the painted roof of Ely gaping to the sky, like the nave of Soissons. Within his own county he would have sought in vain for the lofty landmark of the spire of

Norwich, its stunted remains hidden among the débris of a burnt and pillaged city. He would have found the rich country beyond a charred wilderness, where houseless survivors of ruined villages and market-towns told lurid stories of peaceful inhabitants massacred, of Englishwomen outraged, of English girls carried off to the vilest slavery. With all this horror and humiliation, he would have seen that the invader had swept out of existence old manor-houses and farms, here a Tudor market-place, there a Norman church—all the memorials of a thousand years of placid prosperity, undisturbed by the sieges and battles from which the French war-zone has never been immune for a single century. So the Englishman, gazing on the havoc of a county would have felt that the end of the world had come, for which the occasional hint from the sky dropped by a German airman would not have adequately prepared him.

The once prosperous and picturesque country between the cities of Soissons and Laon was the scene of carnage for fifty months from August 1914. A hundred years before, when Napoleon was making his supreme desperate stand against the armies of three nations, every yard of this blood-stained area was fought over. There is the



Chemin des Dames, which our soldiers knew early and late in the war, and which became a name of sinister significance to our French allies, because of the suspicious circumstances connected with a reverse they suffered on that line. The road was so named because it was constructed for the periodical journeys of 'Mesdames de France,' the spinster daughters of Louis xv., when they went to stay at La Bove, as the house was then called, on the Aillette, with M. de Narbonne, who in a life of much vicissitude was Minister of War under Louis xvi. and one of Napoleon's generals at Wagram and in Russia. His mother, the Duchesse de Narbonne-Lara, was lady-in-waiting to the princesses for whose passage the road was made, and whose virginal ways are irreverently treated in certain memoirs of the eighteenth century. Mme de Narbonne survived them all and also her son, and when she died, in the memory of people who were alive twenty years ago, her life had filled the amazing century which stretched from the end of the Regency to the death of Napoleon in 1821.

Napoleon meets us at every turn, and in this area during the Campagne de France he fought overwhelming masses of Russians and Prussians who could not claim a victory in the battle named

after the plateau of Craonne, which we have seen anew drenched with blood. Then they concentrated near Laon, from which position he failed to drive them. At that date in March 1814, only a fortnight before he finally succumbed, he had in a month won twelve battles against Austria, Russia and Prussia. On this battle-ground of 1814, half a dozen miles north-west of Laon, is the Mont de Joie, near Crépy-en-Laonnais, the site of the long-range battery with which Paris was bombarded. It is almost twenty miles north of Soissons, which is sixty-five miles from Paris ; so the capital was shelled by guns over eighty miles away. It is extremely interesting that these epoch-making weapons operated on the ground where Napoleon had his last glimpses of victory, as we know something about the range of artillery in the campaign of 1814. When the Russians besieged Soissons early in that year, it was able to defy the enemy for a considerable time before its needless and disastrous capitulation. The reason was that the hills commanding the city, on which the Russian guns were placed, were at a distance from 1500 to 2500 yards away, and none of the cannon had an effective range of that length. In 1870 the range of artillery had lengthened, and Soissons

suffered severely from bombardment from the same heights. But even then no gunner dreamed that in a hundred years from the campaign of 1814 the range of artillery would be increased from one mile to eighty. The recent experience of Paris gives cause for reflection as to what developments of the machinery of destruction the human race may invent or endure in future wars.

Blücher watched the battle of Laon from the summit of the mountain where stands the noble four-towered church, formerly a cathedral, which is a conspicuous object from the express line to Bâle, though few English tourists have had the curiosity to halt and enjoy one of the finest prospects in France. Fifteen miles to the west a huge mass could be descried, which on closer view was seen to be the well-preserved remains of a colossal castle. If three of our mediæval castles, such as Rhuddlan, Conway, and Carnarvon, had been rolled into one it would have looked small by the side of Coucy, which seemed to be built for eternity. After standing for seven hundred years it is now a shapeless heap of rubble. Why the Germans, on evacuating Coucy, wantonly blew up this unique relic of the Middle Ages, useless for modern purposes of warfare, is a

question which the ruins of Ypres and Reims may answer.

Ham, nineteen miles north-west of Coucy, had a château just as old which met with a similar fate. Unlike Coucy it had rarely ceased to be inhabited, and it had been used as a lodging for distinguished political prisoners, from Joan of Arc to General Cavaignac and other 'victims of December 1851.' The author of the coup d'état of that date spent several years in that interesting building, which has been wrecked by barbarians, who have no regard for historical associations or for any other tradition which civilisation respects. In August 1840, Louis Napoleon, encouraged by the enthusiasm aroused in Paris by the news that the remains of the great Emperor were to be brought home from Saint Helena, came over from his exile in England to Boulogne with a bale of proclamations and a tame eagle. He was arrested under ridiculous circumstances, tried by the Chamber of Peers, and sentenced to detention in a fortress for life. Ham was chosen for his prison, and he was lodged in the apartments occupied in 1830 by the fallen ministers of Charles x. There the Imperial pretender remained till his escape in May 1846, when, taking



advantage of repairs being executed in the castle, he disguised himself in a workman's clothes and walked out to freedom. His sobriquet of 'Badinguet' which, when he was Emperor, was given to him by journalists and caricaturists of the Opposition, is said to be derived from the name of the workman whose garments he borrowed on that occasion.<sup>1</sup> Bearing a plank on his shoulder he passed the sentry on the drawbridge. Not far away a carriage was waiting, which took him to Saint-Quentin. Here the precaution had been arranged of a change of carriages ; but the relay was late and the fugitive had to wait a long time, only ten miles from Ham, where his absence would soon be noticed. At last the vehicle appeared, and, by Louis Napoleon's escape from recognition, Saint-Quentin became one of those

<sup>1</sup> Another derivation of the nickname is from a Demoiselle Badinguet who was said to have solaced the Prince's loneliness at Ham, as in that fortress State prisoners were permitted certain amenities not usual in a gaol. My eminent confrère of the Institute of France, M. Pierre de la Gorce, the brilliant historian of the Second Empire, writes to me that the popular attribution of the origin of 'Badinguet' to the name of the workman is probably correct. M. de la Gorce is another distinguished son of the war-zone. At his reception in 1917 at the French Academy it was mentioned that he was descended from an officer of Malplaquet, that the home of his childhood was Maubeuge, that he was at school at Douai, and a magistrate at Montreuil, Béthune, and Saint-Omer, all of which places our British forces have seen during the war.

places where the destiny of the world has been changed by fortunate or unfortunate hazard. It may thus rank with Varennes, which we shall pass on our eastward way, where Louis XVI. and the Queen, less lucky, were stopped on their attempted flight to the frontier in 1791. Had Louis Napoleon been arrested at Saint-Quentin, there would have been no Second Empire, no Franco-Prussian war, no unity of Germany, and no universal war as its consequence—and it is useless to conjecture what other events of equal importance might have taken their place. As it was, the carriage came in time to convey the Prince to Valenciennes, whence by train and boat he travelled back to London and Gore House and Miss Howard ; and two years later the prisoner of Ham was Prince President, and on his way to be Emperor of the French.

Saint-Quentin, to which the British line was extended in the last period of the war, possesses two monuments, the dilapidation of which troubles the minds of all lovers of fine architecture : the exquisite hôtel de ville of the fourteenth century and the collegiate church, one of the stateliest Gothic edifices in France. They had survived many a siege since they witnessed the deadly assault when Coligny and his Hugue-

nots were overcome by the Spaniards and Flemings, with an English force sent by Mary Tudor to help her husband, Philip II. in his effort to crush Protestantism when he vowed to build the Escorial in gridiron shape, in honour of St. Lawrence, under whose invocation the victory of Saint-Quentin was won. They had seen the revenues of the town granted as a dowry to Mary Queen of Scots, when, a child, she married the boy Dauphin, who for a few months was Francis II. Dominating the town the 'collegiale' is often called a cathedral, more inaccurately than when that term is applied to the great churches at Laon, Noyon, and Senlis, which were episcopal sees until the Revolution.

Less tragic than the fate of its precious glass and frescoes is what happened to another of the treasures of Saint-Quentin. This is the wonderful collection of a hundred pastels by the greatest master of that art, Quentin de Latour, who was born here in 1704, and died here at the age of eighty-four. Saint-Quentin, though on the way from Paris to Brussels, is so far from the track of English travellers that few of them have inspected the Latour collection in his native town. But every amateur of French art in the eighteenth century

has gazed with admiration on his dazzling portrait of Madame de Pompadour at the Louvre. Those fine critics of eighteenth-century art, the Goncourt brothers, came here in 1866 and thus described the Saint-Quentin collection : ' a stupefying gallery of the life and the humanity of a society : all these heads seem to look at you, all these eyes seem to scan you ; it is as though you had intruded in a salon where the eighteenth century was engaged in conversation and all these mouths had just relapsed into silence.' It may be hoped that the portraits will again give this living impression, though for a perilous season torn away from their native town. Saint-Quentin, now battered and disfigured, reminded the Goncourts of a scene of Molière, and at night the soft sounds of carillons gave them the sensation of sleeping in a musical snuff-box. The gentle music of the chimes was for four long years overwhelmed by the roar of cannon. While it was still distant the collection was not removed betimes to safety. So the Germans when they arrived seized the pictures, knowing their value, and kept them stored in a cellar. At Bapaume, it appears, there were some German art-experts in a reserve corps and they were summoned to compile an ' artistic monograph '



on the pastels of Latour, which the methodic plunderers held in custody. Six thousand copies of this catalogue were issued from the *Korpsverlagsbuchhandlung* at Bapaume, to apprise art-lovers in the fatherland of this fine haul of stolen goods. These gems of French art, though prisoners of war, just escaped being exiled to Germany. As a first stage in that direction they were sent to Maubeuge, where they were exhibited as a show to the German army, together with old French furniture from Caulaincourt—the pillaged château, visited by many British soldiers, between Saint-Quentin and Péronne, which belonged to the family of Caulaincourt, Napoleon's general, whom he made Duc de Vicence. Maubeuge was not an inappropriate asylum for an art collection, as it was the birthplace of Mabuse, one of the Renaissance fathers of Flemish art. From the old frontier stronghold the Germans intended to send the pastels through Belgium by canal-barge. This would have damaged them beyond repair, and their fate was in the balance when at daybreak on November 9, 1918, the British entered Maubeuge, just in time to rescue the Latours. They were not much the worse for their dangerous adventures, and at last they were safely conveyed to

the Louvre for a temporary rest, before being restored to their native town—after this real romance of the battle-line.

At Saint-Quentin we are on the Somme, the valley of which we left at Albert-sur-Ancre on our southward way. The great battle-field of the Somme lies west of Saint-Quentin, most of its area being in the department named after that river. Before the war it was a plateau of placid aspect, which, with its poplars and willows, its sedgy marshes and ponds, had a Corot-like beauty of its own, especially in the spring when the orchards were in flower. It was one of the best-cultivated regions in France, and was studded with prosperous villages, of which more than a hundred and thirty in the department of the Somme alone had names which terminate in 'court.' To-day the Corot landscape has the appearance of an American prairie after a drought—treeless, and covered with rank yellowish vegetation. Every village and every rural church is destroyed, in most cases razed to the ground. The orchards are cut down, the woods laid low by shell-fire, and the countryside deserted. One curious phenomenon has been noticed. Botanists have discovered in the shell-holes, where the earth was turned up as by a

convulsion of nature, plants and wild flowers which never before grew in the region, and nobody knows how the seeds were conveyed thither. This was the scene of the series of fierce and bloody combats in which the British troops covered themselves with glory at the cost of thousands of young lives—Guards and Rifles, Marines and Highlanders, Irishmen and Welshmen, with regiments from half the counties of England, and from all our oversea dominions.

The disappearance of animal life from these devastated plains calls to mind a precaution taken by the French administrative authorities whose orderly vigilance in enforcing regulations laid down by the centralised government was interrupted as little as possible by the disturbance caused by invasion, battle and rapine. The 'opening of the chase' has, since the Revolution, been the chief festival in the national calendar, interesting every class of the people. On a Sunday of early autumn the opening of the shooting-season is decreed by the Minister of Agriculture, in each department according to its latitude which determines the date when harvesting is over. It was natural that the regulation should be maintained during the war in regions remote from the fighting. But its

meticulous application to the war-zone would occur perhaps only to the conscientious mind of a French functionary. During the last stage of the war the *Journal Officiel* announced that on September 15, 1918, the chase would be opened in the department of the Somme, in the three arrondissements of Amiens, Abbeville and Doullens, exception being made of a few cantons, such as Amiens, Corbie and Acheux. In the other two arrondissements of Péronne and Montdidier no shooting was administratively permitted. There the slaughter of a hare or a thrush was prohibited under pain of prosecution and fine, the chase being open in those districts for Germans only, who at the Ministry of Agriculture were presumably classed as 'animaux nuisibles,' for whom there is no close-time.

At an early period of the fighting on the Somme, there was a tragic case of a French officer who was slain almost at the gates of his own home. This was the Duc de Rohan, whose duchy was created by Louis XIV. in favour of Henri Chabot on his marriage with Marguerite de Rohan, the only child and heir of the great Calvinist leader, Henri de Rohan, whose descendants conformed to the Catholic religion. The title is of 1648, so is older than any English dukedom,



excepting those of Norfolk and Somerset. Duke Josselin, who fell on July 13, 1916, at the age of thirty-seven, as a boy had done his military service in the ranks, as did all young Frenchmen whatever their social position, and as colour-sergeant he had seen active service in the Far East. He was the grandson of the old duke, who had been brought up among the survivors of the court of Marie-Antoinette, and was a picturesque and agreeable figure in Parisian society thirty years ago. The old Breton castle of Josselin is the chief family seat; but they had also a charming château a few miles from Péronne at Manancourt, near the woods of Sailly-Saillisel, of sad memory in many an English home. It was while commanding a dangerous operation that the gallant Captain de Rohan died at Hardecourt, a pleasant ride from his mother's house, which has since been laid in ruins. To her, who has since been enrolled on the Legion of Honour for her noble services to the wounded, he wrote in a letter which came into her hands, the same day as the news of his glorious death: 'If we go on like this I hope to be soon at Manancourt. It will be splendid, but I believe I shall manage it.'

The destruction of the Château de Manan-

court is one of those incidents which in France have been repeated a hundred times during the war, and a somewhat detailed account of it will bring home to English people what our Allies have had to suffer in aggravation of the anguish which both nations endured for the sacrifice of precious lives. Manancourt came into the Rohan family by the marriage of the old duke mentioned above with Mlle de Boissy, who was granddaughter of the Marquise de Folleville, the inheritor of the property. It was built in 1715, the last year of Louis XIV., and in the latter part of the next reign Jean-Jacques Rousseau was a frequent visitor, one of the treasures of the library being the original editions of his works which he had seen placed on the shelves. It was not a stately mediæval fortress, like Josselin in the Morbihan, but the gracious and comfortable home of an ancient family, which illustrated the domestic side of French life. It had suffered little during the Revolution owing to the fortitude of its mistress, who having been the friend of Jean-Jacques did not hesitate to call herself 'Citoyenne Folleville' while her husband was at the wars. Thus were preserved not only the books, but the exquisite examples of Regency and Louis xv. furniture, which stood there for

two centuries. Of that beautiful home nothing remains. It sounds incredible, but all that is standing is one fragment of a wall and a shattered summer-arbour.

A daughter of the house, Princesse Lucien Murat, whose marriage was an alliance of the ancient monarchy with the Napoleonic epic, had the courage to visit the ruins of the home of her happy childhood. The road from Péronne to Manancourt was a *via dolorosa* which prepared her for some of the horror that awaited her at home ; for on the familiar way not a solitary house, not a single church remained standing. Where the château gates used to be thrown open to welcome guests, a heap of stones marked the site of the lodge, of which the keeper was an old soldier, known as Sebastopol, who used to regale the children with stories of the Crimea. Within the domain the first object that met the dismayed visitor's eye, by the mutilated avenue, was a German trench in which lay the wreck of her own piano. A 'lava-bed,' familiar to all who have trodden the battle-fields of to-day, covered the pleasant lawns and flower-borders. Here lay the foot of a Louis xv. chair, the remnant of a priceless suite ; there the panel of a Regency screen which used to shelter the friendly

tea-table. Under a pile of bricks was the only piece of furniture not in atoms—an iron safe, prised open with the skill of burglars, from which the papers and valuables had been taken. Of the house there was nothing, nothing. Gone without a trace was the great salon which occupied the whole centre of the building, back and front ; gone was the fine billiard room, with its magnificent eighteenth-century *boiseries* where the annual Christmas-tree used to be set up for the village children who came to sing their Noël's. Though there were signs of shell-fire in the work of destruction, it was so complete that it must have been wantonly finished with dynamite. By the wrecked church the mausoleum had been first shelled and then desecrated, the coffins and the remains scattered about the churchyard. An ancestor had said : ' I desire to be buried in the little cemetery of Manancourt, for there I shall rest undisturbed '—and this was to be his fate, while the Germans who were killed there are buried methodically among the rose-trees. One of the missing family treasures was the good old peasant woman, the *gardienne* of the château, who had been there for sixty years, and whose welcome in the patois of Picardy was one of the joyous incidents of home-coming in the past.



It is of sad interest to note that the devastated property of a great French family, of unsparing hospitality to English friends, was guarded by British soldiers, when a daughter of the house came to her tragic home, as was also the grave of the gallant head of the Rohans at Cérisy.

Péronne has suffered more severely than it did in centuries of wars. It was there that took place the amazing incident in 1468, when Charles the Bold, at the conclusion of an interview with Louis XI., imprisoned his redoubtable enemy in a tower of the old castle, which has had the fate of Coucy and Ham. In January 1871, Péronne experienced a foretaste of German methods, when during the siege, before the valiant town capitulated, it had one-eighth of its houses totally destroyed, and three-quarters of them damaged by bombardment, which called forth a protest from the French Commander, General Faidherbe, in words which might have been written to-day : 'Le bombardement de Péronne est un des exemples les plus odieux de cette férocité calme et méthodique que les généraux du roi Guillaume prétendent introduire dans les usages de la guerre.' (*L'Armée du Nord*, p. 51.) Yet how mild was this aggression on a civil population

compared with the daily acts of the Germans since 1914.

It has been said that the barbarism of the Germans as displayed in the late war, is due to their civilisation being of relatively recent origin. But when we contrast their behaviour in the Franco-Prussian war with that which we have now before our eyes, it is clear that half a century's practice of civilisation has redoubled their barbarism. This patent fact raises the question as to whether the new civilisation of the mechanical age has or has not a generally humanising effect, and it may be of interest to discuss it on a later page. Meanwhile we know that while the calm and methodic ferocity of the Germans, in the invasion of 1870-1, damaged a large proportion of the houses of Péronne, in 1918 they did not leave one single house standing in that ancient and characteristic French market town. In the interest of the future peace of the world it would have been a good thing if a hundred similar towns in Germany had been reduced to the same condition by the artillery of France and of England. By their dastardly surrender before their territory was invaded, the Germans escaped the wholesome penalty of having on their soil perpetual memorials of their

defeat, more tangible than loss of life or of money could ever be, which would have lasted as long as the ruins of the castle of Heidelberg.

Here we must retrace our steps into the Aisne and go to the south of the department, where another deadly struggle on the Marne hastened the final victory. Among the vineyards on the banks of that river, where it leaves the old province of Champagne, stood Château-Thierry, a little town so picturesque that its smiling aspect sometimes tempted a traveller to break his journey on the way to Paris from Épernay. That centre of a genial commerce just escaped the worst of the war, and the bibulous Germans never had a sadder disappointment than when they missed sacking the rock-cellars, which were old when Napoleon visited them, and which with their millions of bottles lie beneath the Faubourg de la Folie where stand the sumptuous houses of the rich vine-growers whose names, such as Chandon and Périer, are of world-wide solace. Château-Thierry, less fortunate, saw many a young soldier fall, French, British, and American, and some of them died amid the ruins of the ancient Renaissance house where La Fontaine was born. With that intelligence which distinguishes local authorities in all lands, the

municipal council had already mutilated this relic for the sake of a 'street-improvement.' But what remained was preserved as a museum of memorials of the immortal fabulist. The epithet is not too strong, as there is no French writer whose expressions and language have to such an extent entered into popular speech and literary diction ; so that his position in France in this respect may be compared almost with that of Shakespeare in England. He is thus much more often quoted than his great contemporary classic Racine, who also was born in these parts, at La Ferté-Milon.

It was this tradition which inspired a charming little poem, published in the *Bulletin des Armées* of September 27, 1917, by Captain Ab Der Halden of the 5th Algerian Tirailleurs, in memory of his friend, Lieutenant Marcel Mironneau, killed in action. It was entitled *Buts de Guerre*, the subject of the additional chapter of this book. The poem relates how a group of young French soldiers at the front were discussing one evening, between two battles, the question which has perplexed so many of us—the reasons why they were fighting :

' L'un déclara : " Moi, je me bats pour le drapeau."

L'autre : " Pour être libre."—" Et moi pour mon troupeau."



Half a dozen others gave each his different reason, and it may be observed that not one of them suggested that he was fighting 'to put down militarism.' Finally, one of the group who, absorbed in a book, had taken no part in the discussion, was interrogated :

" Et pour quel idéal peux-tu mourir demain ? "

Mais le soldat montra le livre dans sa main,

Et dit en reprenant la page familière

" Moi, je me bats pour La Fontaine et Molière. "

A leafy road from Château-Thierry across the forest of the Montagne de Reims, was often trodden by La Fontaine on his way to the Seminary at Reims, when he left the riverside, where he had studied the habits of ' Petit Poisson,' to follow the woodland path, where he saw ' Maître Corbeau sur un arbre perché,' and on a windy day heard the dialogue between ' Le Chêne et le Roseau.' He soon renounced ' le petit collet ' when he found his own imperishable vocation. His association with the cathedral at Reims was one of a thousand memories clinging to the walls of the great national sanctuary which, in its interior, was a model of perfect unity, so vast and harmonious that its beauty survived the ravages of many restorers. That noble building, which was alive with the tradition of centuries, is now

a maimed and lifeless skeleton. A farewell visit to Reims, some months before the war, discovered the majestic west front, as usual half-hidden with ugly scaffolding, as though to assure its admirers that it had nothing worse to fear than excessive restoration. The familiar features of the church were all noted. The rose windows shed their colours on transepts and nave, as they did when Joan of Arc brought Charles VII. to be crowned at the altar. The blue and gold spangled ceiling, painted for the vain and illusory coronation of Charles X. in 1825, roused regrets in minds which could not anticipate the catastrophe which would blend in common ruin ancient memorials and modern defacements. The conversion of the archbishop's palace into a municipal museum seemed a deplorable result of disestablishment, which German shells were soon to efface. The question arose whether the last hours at Reims should be spent in quietly contemplating the stately scene of the sacred pageants of the old monarchy, or in a visit to the church of Saint Remi, of which the interest was antiquarian rather than historic or æsthetic. Its patron, who lay there in a tomb, now a heap of rubble, was the famous bishop who baptized Clovis, and his whole army

by platoons—an operation apparently of temporal as well as spiritual benefit, as it was followed by victory of Frank over Goth and Hun which established the Frankish domination of Gaul.

To the south-east of Reims stretch the Campi Catelauni, where Frank and Hun were fighting 1500 years ago, before the baptism of Clovis. The region is now known as Champagne Pouilleuse, and Voltaire protested against the contemptuous epithet as not worthily applied to the unfertile plain which even in his time the indomitable industry of the French peasant had made productive. The Germans have once more reduced it to a desert, as did the Huns in the dim ages, when they destroyed the primitive city of Reims, and under Attila met the Gauls at the legendary battle of Châlons. Ethnologists tell us that it is an error to describe as Huns the barbarians of modern Germany. But by their similar behaviour in the same regions they lay conclusive claim to descent from the hordes which devastated Gaul under a leader who was known as 'the Scourge of God.'

This dusty plain is the site of the camp of Châlons—the Aldershot of France, at equal distance from Reims and from the city whose name

it bears. The year before the war the traveller who went eastward from Reims, traversing the great camp, found himself in a new atmosphere. Up to this point the talk of the inhabitants of places on his route was of the possibility of a miners' strike at Lens, or of the socialist town-councillors at Lille, or of the claim, resisted by Reims and Épernay, of the wines of the Aube to be classed as 'champagne.' Here, as he approached the frontier, there was but one topic of conversation—'War'—the war which Germany was preparing to let loose, with its armies massed at the frontier, ready to spring upon France. The way to Verdun lies through the wooded Argonne, where again and again the destinies of France were decided. Here is the mound at Valmy, which marks the battle-field where Dumouriez and Kellermann in 1792 beat the Prussians fresh from their capture of Verdun, and won the first victory for the Revolution. Here is Sainte-Ménéhould where fifteen months earlier the lumbering coach conveying the fugitive Louis XVI. and the Queen towards the frontier was recognised by Post-master Drouet, who overtook them a few miles further at Varennes, whence they were turned back to Paris, where their captor distinguished himself



by voting at the Convention for the death of the King.

In August 1913 Verdun was a place of arms most interesting to visit. It was full of troops. Within the circle of Vauban's old bastions and in the outlying modern forts there was a garrison 30,000 strong, and the soldiers of all grades, almost within sight of the unaccepted frontier of 1871, were burning for a fight with Germany in order to rectify it. The officers had been inspired by a recent visit of Sir John French to the camp of Châlons, and the British general had intimated to his hosts that in case of a German aggression against France, England might send 150,000 troops to meet it. In 1913, when the military authorities of the *entente* thought in thousands instead of in millions, such a re-inforcement seemed sufficient.

Verdun is a town of unique characteristics. It is built on several hillsides, and access from one quarter to another is obtained by precipitous flights of steps. At the highest point stood the cathedral, now sadly battered, inferior in architecture to the churches of the other cities of the Trois Évêchés—Toul and Metz—yet imposing with its lofty towers, which command a wide view over the valley of the Meuse. The wooded

landscape is unrecognisable now, and when those towers can once again be mounted, it will be seen that villages which were a feature of the hilly prospect have vanished. So complete is the destruction that three of them, within a pleasant walk from Verdun, have even disappeared from the map of France. The mayors of Fleury, Vaux and Douaumont have been informed that the communes they administered have ceased to exist officially. The villages are 'morts sur le champ d'honneur,' like the thousands of brave French soldiers who fell defending them. Though they never rise again from the blighted soil their names will live for ever as symbols of the heroic French resistance to the deadly German onslaught on Verdun.

Whatever pacific ideas prevailed in France further from the frontier there was no such illusion at Verdun in 1913. The weekly *retraite aux flambeaux* was no mere show to entertain the population as it was in western towns. It seemed a solemn parade of actors about to play in a very big drama. The *musique militaire* in the gardens down by the river on a Sunday night was not the ordinary promenade concert for the good people of a provincial centre. Amid the vast crowd of uniforms, which far out-

numbered the civilian costumes, it was like the relaxation of an army on the march at a bivouac. There was a little corporal with a beautiful baritone voice, who sang ' J'aime le son du cor le soir au fond des bois ' ; and Alfred de Vigny's words, with their evocation of Roland and his Paladins, accompanied by the horns and trumpets of the regiment, suggested not the plaintive end of a hunting day, but the bugle calls soon to be heard for another kind of chase in the forests of the Meuse. What has become of ' Corporal Flisch,' whose name shows that he came from Alsace ? Did he live through the fighting for the restitution of his native land, or is his voice as silent as those of hundreds of his comrades who applauded him on a summer evening just a year before the call to arms ?

Between Verdun and Metz there were many peaceful-looking châteaux and farms, which the least foreseeing traveller knew must enjoy a security less than that of buildings on the slopes of Vesuvius. After Conflans, the railway junction for Nancy, often bombarded, not by the Germans, but by the Allies, as it was in the hands of the enemy, the fields are seen to be dotted with white crosses. At first they look as though they might trace the frontier of 1871 close at

hand. But they now survive that wrongful boundary line, for they mark the burial-places of soldiers on the battle-fields of 1870. At the frontier station, Amanvillers, less than a year before the war, British subjects were permitted to enter German territory without passports or any formality, though French people were submitted to rigorous restrictions. The arrival at the great strategic station of Metz was a reminder of the Germans' perfected preparation for war with their neighbours. Outside it had the appearance of a huge castellated fortress rather than a railway station ; inside it was so vast that a regiment entraining on a distant platform, with its band playing, did not disturb the traffic or cause any encumbrance in the wide area.

Of all the places passed in review there are few so abounding in memories of tragic romance as the ancient French city of Metz. In modern times, its story in 1870, from the approach of the Germans at the end of July to the traitorous capitulation in October, is one series of moving episodes. At the beginning we see Napoleon III. like a fugitive phantom, at first accompanied by his pathetic little son, making his headquarters at the prefecture. On the Sunday he attended High



Mass in the lofty cathedral, with the Prince Imperial on one side of him and on the other his cousin, Prince Napoleon, who was not a usual frequenter of churches. The Emperor followed the service attentively with his missal, and when at the end of the Mass the *Domine salvum fac Imperatorem* was intoned for the last time in his presence, the young Prince was seen to weep and to tremble. But the enemy was approaching, so the hunted Emperor retired to a villa in the suburbs. Thence he withdrew to Gravelotte, spending there the night of his last *Fête Napoléon*, on the eve of the battle, which associated the name of that village with his downfall. For the battle he did not wait, but fled to meet his 'destiny,' of which he had so often dreamed, a fortnight later at Sedan.

It was most interesting to visit the battle-fields, especially when one had authorisation to cross and recross the frontier, visiting here a place which remained French, such as Mars-la-Tour, and there neighbouring villages, such as Gravelotte and Rezonville, which Germany annexed in 1871. One of the latter was Saint Privat, where the Prussian Guard perished in August 1870. So the old Kaiser, when the new boundary was being settled, declared that the graveyard of his

Guards should belong to Germany, and it was part of the price paid by France for the retention of Belfort.

Mars-la-Tour until 1914 remained a characteristic French village, untouched by German proximity. The *adoration perpétuelle*, in the diocese of Nancy, was so organised that here it should be an anniversary service of August 1870, and in 1913 Mass was sung by the curé of Tronville, another village on the battle-field rescued from Germany. Crowds came from villages on both sides of the frontier to hear preach the Abbé Faller, the aged curé of Mars-la-Tour, who had been placed there half a century before by Mgr Dupont des Loges, the good Breton Bishop of Metz, in whose diocese the village then was. After the service the old patriot did the honours of his war-museum. Most of the relics were collected by the brave curé himself, and though nearly blind he could point to each of them, calling special attention to a series of bloodthirsty proclamations worded in passable French, warning the inhabitants that death was the penalty for any infringement of the rules laid down by the invader—and these documents were signed 'Frederick,' whom English courtiers called 'Frederick the Noble.'

The old abbé died when the Germans once more took possession of his village, which they bombarded, choosing with insolent cruelty a 16th of August, the anniversary of the battle of Mars-la-Tour. If any of the old curé's treasures survived the bombardment it is improbable that the Germans have preserved the proclamations of the Crown Prince Frederick with the care they bestowed on the stolen pastels of Quentin Latour.

The general impression taken away from Metz on the eve of the war was the lamentable progress of Germanisation. In the streets little children at their play were heard chattering German, which their predecessors would not have understood twenty years before. In the villages of Lorraine the people still talked French. There was a group of peasants passing across the esplanade where the inevitable effigy of 'Wilhelm der Grosse' then dominated the statues of Marshal Ney and of other worthies of Lorraine. The leader of the party, pointing to the old Kaiser's statue, exclaimed: 'Voilà Napoléon'—a misapprehension refreshing to English ears in the Germanised capital of French Lorraine. The esplanade and the chief streets of the town were that week decorated with flags and arches and coloured lamps. It looked as though an imperial

visit were expected for the anniversary of the battles around Metz. The beautifying of the city was only in honour of a Catholic congress, and the action of the government in authorising it was most significant. A few miles away across the frontier of 1871 not even a parochial procession on the Fête Dieu was allowed in the streets of a French town. But in Lorraine, annexed to Germany, a Roman Catholic gathering was officially celebrated with much greater display than is seen in a French city even on the national fête of the 14th of July. The German policy of conciliating a powerful section of the population of Lorraine and Alsace, whose religion was not that of the chief of the State, will have to be taken into account by the French government in its administration of the reannexed provinces. The question is not made easier by the fact that the Roman Catholic Church in Alsace-Lorraine has remained subject to a concordatory arrangement with the Holy See, while France has ruptured its relations with the Vatican.

It was far east of the annexed provinces that the battle-line in France was made inevitable. It was in Berlin that every detail of the coming invasion was studied and perfected. The great



national fête of that capital was Sedanstag, the anniversary of the battle in France which gave Alsace and Lorraine to Germany. To celebrate it, just a year before the battle of the Marne, the Kaiser held his final parade on the great Tempelhofer Feld at Berlin. There he sat motionless on his horse for hour after hour, while his hosts of every arm defiled before him—and they were only a handful of the German army, the garrison of Berlin. How could Europe remain impassive before such a warning and defiance? How could politicians at home and their agents in Germany ignore what was impending? Such a thought assailed a mere spectator of European affairs, three days later, when passing over another battle-area on which at all events we thought ourselves supreme. From the deck of an Atlantic liner the shores of Germany were becoming dim when a battle squadron, led by the *Moltke*, came steaming past as much as to show that the German fatherland was no longer confined to the Continent. Then in the direction taken by the ships of war was seen a white mass rising from the sea. This was Heligoland, the priceless outpost of the German Empire, obtained from England for nothing, and a monument of the criminal folly of a British minister.

## PART III

### AN ADDITIONAL CHAPTER

‘ Pourquoi notre jeunesse a-t-elle péri ? ’

It has been a sad experience to write the foregoing pages. Before the war it would have been a joy to sketch an historical survey of a region of France. Almost every place mentioned would have recalled memories of pleasant French homes and the first happy impressions of other fair scenes often revisited, or would have reminded an untiring wayfarer in France that there were attractive spots which he had glanced at hastily, to be explored on his next journey. No such excursions can ever again be made in north-eastern France. The land made desolate has lost, in town and country, all its ancient features, which, if repaired some day, will be restored in unfamiliar form. Meanwhile the only objects for travellers' curiosity will be ruins or battle-

fields, 'where every turf beneath their feet shall be a soldier's sepulchre.'

To an Englishman, even though he knows France as well as his native land, a sadder thought is that nearly every map-name written in this book is that of a place where English boys have died. Many thousands of mature men also have gone forth from Britain and from Greater Britain, never to return to their children, their sacrifice being greater than that of boys who had only their young lives to offer. But the proportion of the dead who had only just overstepped the threshold of manhood, or who had not even reached it, is heartrending. The dedication of this book mentions that nearly six hundred officers of the old 60th Rifles—the King's Royal Rifle Corps—have perished in the war. It is a colossal figure, even though that proud and gallant regiment, which stands first in the British army for the number of victories embroidered on its colours, opened its ranks to many new battalions. Of these 575 dead there are nearly 400 subalterns. If the casualty lists of the rank and file of any regiment were analysed, the same proportion of young lives laid down would be revealed, representing every class of the community—as indeed do now the lists of fallen

officers, who are no longer exclusively recruited, as in the past, from the Public Schools.

The Roll of Honour of those schools is of surpassing poignancy, because it seems only the other day that one saw the boys at work or at play, who are now lying in soldiers' graves. From Eton College alone 1150 have died in the war. A large majority of these died between the ages of eighteen and twenty-nine; so most of them only ten years ago were joyously striving for bloodless laurels on playing fields and river, or were children of tender age, too young as yet for a public school. About that time there was a Fourth of June of unusual summer-beauty, when School-Yard gathered the traditional crowd of parents and sisters and old Etonians for the calling of 'Absence,' before the procession of boats. Of the boys who answered to their names on that radiant evening 400 are now dead—most of them lying beneath the scarred turf of Flanders, Artois, and Picardy—boys who had all that is best and happiest in English life to look forward to, from the tiny mites in their new tall hats, who last spring were at a baby school, to the towering adolescents who next month were to stride into the world and its unknown adventures, the least likely of



which was an early death on a French or Belgian battle-field.

Strive as one may to fix one's thoughts on the past traditions of places where our armies fought, as one pores over war-maps, stained with the mud of the battle-field, to verify once familiar sites, their names seem to cry out that here was the last earthly scene which met the eyes of many a high-spirited English youth, who five years ago had heard of war only as a thing of far-off times. We may revive the humours of the courts at Compiègne, or at Valenciennes and at Saint-Quentin recall the sunny canvasses of Watteau and of Latour. A field of the dead fills the foreground of the panorama of history, and it is well that it is so apparent. Otherwise the war and the victory will have been in vain. For the chief hope for the future of England lies in the perpetual remembrance of the flower of the nation cut down before its prime.

Here is a fatal wood where British soldiers found the fragile body of their boyish captain, who in death looked like a fair young maiden, no older than when, a curly-headed child, he was seen two or three years before in a joyful crowd, rushing out of midday school to greet a face well known at home. Here is a ruined

village where fell a faithful servant, who did not wait for conscription to follow to the war his 'young masters,' one of whom was sorely wounded a mile away by the side of a lake whose waters were red that day. Here are the remains of an historic town where a pacific young shopman, transformed by the fortune of war into a lieutenant of infantry, won the Victoria Cross by an act of chivalrous daring, and was slain the next morning before he knew of his fame. Here is a tragic ridge which brings to mind a long last talk in a college quadrangle about the things to be fulfilled by the new generation with one who was the hope of an ancient line and who now lies in this sacred ground. Why have these boys, and hundreds of thousands of their contemporaries died? That is the question that each name on the war-maps seems to ask.

The things to be fulfilled by the new generation, now that its flower has perished, will take a different form. It was a peculiarly interesting generation which had just attained manhood when the war began. In Great Britain it seemed to recognise and gave promise of correcting the laxity, social and political, which threatened to demoralise our race at the end of the Victorian

period and in the succeeding reign. In the history of the world there has been no harsher experience than that of this young generation, which, innocent of all wrong, was swept out of existence to expiate the faults of its unpunished elders. This applies to all peoples engaged in the world-war, not one of which has produced in our time a generation of high-minded leaders to guide aright the destiny of nations. Here our chief concern is with England and the British Empire, the only hope for which seems to be that the survivors of the young generation sent to defend us on the battle-line may have a preponderant share in governing the nation and the race which they and their dead comrades saved.

If this hope could be realised, we might discern a partial answer to the question—for what cause and for what end has the majority of the young generation perished? The issue has been obscured by theories put forward by sheltered non-combatants. The politician, who looks unabashed on the havoc, of which by his unforeseeing levity he has been an artisan, says that our youth has died 'to put down militarism.' It has been my good fortune to know soldiers without number who have gone through the

war, and not one of them has been aware that this was the purpose of his own endurance and of the death of his comrades. Had it been so the bravery, the sufferings, and the sacrifice of our heroes would have been in vain. For among all the doubtful consequences of the war one is certain—that the whole world must perforce submit to some form of militarism for many a year. When the British Grand Fleet went out to receive the surrender of the German navy, it steamed into the North Sea with decks cleared for action, every man at his battle-port, hatches closed, guns and ammunition ready, although the probability of the enemy showing fight was practically inexistent. So in the future, however weary the world is of war, no nation can ever dare to risk the danger of being surprised unarmed.

The manhood of the civilised world turned into trained soldiers and civil populations experienced in warfare, cannot improve the prospect of peaceful settlement of all discussions which must inevitably arise between nations. Though the German Empire is crushed, what force is going to keep its impenitent and robust people in a condition of pacific repression? Supposing that for a time the League of Nations



brings to pass the emasculation of the German people by commercial and moral restraint, will no differences ever disturb the harmony of the leaguers, and how will they be allayed? If one of the leagued nations, incompletely purged of 'the infection of nature,' surprises a neighbour by diverting its airships from postal and passenger service to military offensive, by what means will it be restrained? Will inventors of instruments of destruction suddenly lose their talent, which now seems inexhaustible, beating their long-range guns into statues of politicians? Will modern military training and arming convert the ingenious millions of China into a society for the propagation of peace among their ambitious neighbours of the Far East? With the disruption of the great empire of the Hapsburgs, will the released races, whose rivalries are a thousand years old, submit peaceably to new artificial boundaries improvised by an incoherent committee of international amateurs? Will the quarter of the globe which stretches from Prussia to Japan, formerly known as the Russian Empire, suddenly become a vast abode of brotherly love where the wild beasts of the human race, who have drenched the land with blood, will display the amenities of the tigers

and the bears of Milton's Paradise before the fall? Will the British army in India be withdrawn, and will its withdrawal be justified by the cessation of frontier wars, when the Pathan and the Afridi are tamed by Bengali Babus who have studied the representative system at the Inns of Court? Events on the Afghan boundary since these words were written throw doubts upon this happy prospect. Perhaps, however, the League of Nations will permit England to retain troops in India as an armed police-force. In that case shall we have to obtain leave from an international tribunal to bring them to Europe, supposing the eternal peace of the western world is disturbed? As there seems to be no representation of Islam on the League of Nations, it is not clear how it is proposed to put an end to religious wars proclaimed by followers of the prophet. So if the tribes of our Indian frontier persist in their war-like ways will every foray from a border station be submitted to a cosmopolitan council at Geneva? will Peshawar and Rawal Pindi await orders from Tokio and Washington when wild invaders are sweeping down the Khyber Pass?

Citizens of the United States hostile to the eminent President, who they say has added

the term 'ideal' to the rich vocabulary of the American electoral system, declare that the League of Nations, if effective, will be fatal to the Monroe Doctrine. With stronger reason we may say that there is some risk of it becoming a league for the dissolution of the British Empire. It would be unbecoming for an Englishman even to consider the suggestion of American critics of their President, to the effect that his ideals have no more distant purview than that of a coming election in the United States. But it may be observed with great respect that the idea of a mystical society of nations, which will overcome human nature and secure peace for ever, is a somewhat presumptuous invasion of the future which lies in the hands of the gods. Addressing the American President as the Chief of a State which, though he brought it late into the war, helped to dismember the empires of Germany, Austro-Hungary and Turkey, we may say :—

'Sire, vous pouvez prendre à votre fantaisie  
L'Europe à Charlemagne, à Mahomet l'Asie,  
Mais vous ne prendrez pas Demain à l'Éternel.'

Meanwhile we may note the opinion of intelligent Americans, who see that one inevitable result of the establishment of the League of

Nations must be the formation of a permanent standing army in the United States to enforce the action of the League. We all know the story of Keate expounding the Scriptures at Eton: 'Blessed are the peacemakers. If you boys are not peacemakers I will flog you.'

The talk about putting down militarism and especially German militarism would be more convincing if the cry had been raised before the war. But in those days the aggressive power and prosperity of Germany seemed to inspire in the neighbouring countries admiration rather than dread or disapprobation. English optimists, who then chose to ignore the now familiar theme of the bad blood of the Hohenzollerns, declared that the Kaiser always remembered that he was the grandson of Queen Victoria, and would never countenance war with England; that England was bound to Germany not only by unity of commercial interests, but by intellectual ties of which an affectionate testimony was the bestowal of Rhodes Scholarships at Oxford on German students—a British endowment of a nursery for German spies under the personal supervision of the Kaiser. If an Englishman so free from insularity as was Cecil Rhodes was capable of such fatuity, it was less surpris-



ing that our narrower rulers at home should have assumed towards Germany an attitude of submissive friendliness. It is more surprising that in France, where popular instinct for foreign affairs is more general than in England, there should have been a movement towards friendly relations with the conquerors of 1870. This movement, as was revealed later, was secretly subsidised with German money and it allured so many of the French population innocent of treasonable corruption, that at the elections on the eve of the war a majority of deputies was returned in favour of reducing the military strength of France.

Some months before the French elections this tendency in England and in France gave me subject for reflection when visiting Verdun in August 1913. In England our optimists were drawing comfortable conclusions from the plausible suavity of Prince Lichnowski at the Embassy on Carlton House Terrace, or were quoting the agreeable experiences of caravans of politicians, divines, and town-councillors who had roamed over Germany in quest of signs of peace and good-will, which were proffered in abundance to the guileless Britons. It was like being transported into another planet to arrive at Verdun

the fortress-city, soon to endure the direst siege of all it had sustained in centuries of warfare. For here every soldier in the great garrison, within sight of the lost frontier of Lorraine, knew that the war, which came eleven months later, was inevitable. It was in this atmosphere, completely French, and impregnated with that intense patriotism which instant danger generates, that a cavalry officer gave me a new book which showed that even in France that sentiment did not universally prevail. The book was M. Marcel Sembat's *Faites un Roi, sinon faites la Paix*. The author had been for twenty years a socialist deputy for Paris, and later, during the war, he held office in M. Briand's ministry of 1915. The work of this experienced parliamentarian was an indictment of parliamentary government, more severe than was ever formulated by its most hostile French critics, such as M. Charles Maurras and M. Maurice Barrès, both of whom indeed the author quoted with praise. He started from the postulate that war between France and Germany was inevitable, as matters then stood in July 1913, and it is important to note the date. He then argued that as parliamentary government had proved itself inefficient in peace, and as

France was not likely to set up a monarchy, which in his opinion was alone capable of conducting a war successfully, the only possible resource was an alliance with Germany, the price being the renunciation of French claims to Alsace-Lorraine, for which French socialists cared so little that rather than go to war for it, they would stir up insurrection. It was an experience of uncanny realism to read this essay in cynical paradox on the frontier of Lorraine—at Verdun, the outpost fortress of France, and at Metz, which held that position till captured by Germany in 1870—in the presence of two huge armies manifestly about to fly at one another.

One point made by this socialist writer exposes a weakness in all democratic parliaments—reckless finance which facilitates dishonesty. In Germany, he said, the taxpayer knew that for every mark voted, a mark's worth of useful work would be done : while in France when one franc was contributed by the taxpayer, seventy-five centimes of it were dissipated in waste and pilfering, and he was lucky if the remaining twenty-five centimes were profitably employed. The responsibility for the French writer's exposition of the financial ways of his own govern-

ment must be left to him. But it must bring to our minds the squandering with impunity of our diminishing public resources during the war. As though the legitimate burden of the war was not sufficiently overwhelming the faithless guardians of the national purse have wantonly added millions to it. They have thrown them into the waters of a loch or into the estuary of a river, undertaking new insanities even after the war was over, defacing an historical landscape and destroying fertile corn-lands, with devastation as ruthless as that inflicted by the Germans on the invaded territory of their enemies. It is by a polite euphemism that these millions are said to have been 'thrown away.' No dredging or digging will ever recover them from the water, the sand, or the soil. There is no need to conjecture what has become of the money wrung from a nation in its distress. There are newly prosperous citizens, not all of British ancestry, who have no difficulty in replying, from their point of view, to the question why the young generation has perished. Together with their kindred souls the 'profiteering' traders, likewise licensed to prey upon the victims of the war, they can point to their houses and domains, their 'honours' and other



glaring objects of luxury, far beyond their power to purchase until the war came, as a scourge to most of us, but as a source of gain to them ; and these are the first war-memorials set up in England to commemorate our gallant dead.

There will be more to be said presently about the tendency in England to imitate bad features of the German system, while eschewing the good. Here we must note that painful as it is to think of a French democrat being moved to admire the German system and to have advocated an alliance between France and Germany, the same order of ideas was supported in England a few years earlier, not by paradoxical writers, but by serious politicians. The most aggressive imperialist who ever held office in England was in favour of a British alliance with autocratic militarist Germany, though well he knew the character of the German people and its government. By a merciful providence the English political leader had not sufficient influence to tempt his country to go smiling into a friendly jaunt with the German man-eater, or the adventure would have been that prefigured by a late Latin poet : *risusque cum tigre manebat*.

We escaped the peril of an alliance with Germany, which under our constitutional prac-

tice might have been imposed upon us without the nation or parliament being consulted, as was the case when Heligoland was given to Germany in 1890. A masterful minister presented that priceless piece of British territory to Germany, without consulting either his own people or the Frisian population of the island. Presumably he supposed that he was giving away only a holiday resort for Prussians, as the *Colonial Office List* of that day, the official handbook, said that Heligoland's most valuable feature was 'the best sea-bathing in Europe.' Yet in the Foreign Office he could have found a despatch from our ambassador at Berlin, of seventeen years before, which showed that Bismarck knew its value, and already in 1873 was suggesting that Great Britain 'could offer to Germany Heligoland.' That wanton bestowal on the Germans of what they knew to be an incalculable naval advantage, with only a feeble protest from the Opposition in Parliament, was an example of the lack of knowledge displayed by British public men in all matters of national sentiment and political opinion on the Continent. Even though Parliament claims the right to revise treaties with foreign powers, a disciplined ministerial majority with an indifferent

Opposition, will leave such questions to the arbitrary decision of ministers, pretty much as in the past. Had the representatives of the British nation not been in that condition of ignorance which caused it to condone the crime of Heligoland in 1890, our little regular army would not have been crossing the sea to its doom on the twenty-fourth anniversary of the fatal treaty, and we should probably not be mourning to-day the loss of thousands of other young lives.

The submissive friendliness of our attitude towards Germany calls to mind another reason advanced to justify the sacrifice of our young generation. They have died, it is said, to put down not merely militarism, but the whole system of Prussianism. This has a plausible sound, and it would have been a laudable achievement to put down Prussianism by the example of States which were strong and prosperous without that system. As Victor Hugo said, in prophetic mood, when he came from exile to Paris in 1870, to share the rigours of the siege : ' *Le monde ne peut subir l'abominable Germanisme.*' It is nearly half a century since the old seer spoke thus, and what have we done in England to help in rescuing the world from the

aggression of German influence ? The peaceful penetration of Prussianism into our midst has been so complacently aided and accepted in England by rulers and ruled, that while the military result of the war is the defeat of Germany at appalling cost to the victors, it will be a Prussian victory in the civil domain of this kingdom, unless we repudiate our imitative policy. If we do not, the sacrifice of our youth will in this respect have been in vain.

Before the war a democratic leader, courting popularity on the slippery slopes of state-socialism, relied for his success on a system of compulsory insurance imported from Germany. Had all the conservative and moderate elements in the nation opposed the scheme, it would not have gone far. Radicals, and especially those on their way to be Tories, have frequently preached revolution without much harm ensuing. But in this case the party which used to call itself 'conservative' supported the policy, and in defending the cognate scheme of Old Age Pensions, actually claimed its paternity. So the ironical spectacle was presented of members of 'anti-socialist' societies helping to set up the formidable machinery of state-socialism, which is subversive of constitutional conservatism, and



is incompatible with representative government. This was a serious adventure for a nation, which by the individual efforts of its citizens had become the greatest world-power since ancient Rome. It was the surrender of a beneficent polity suited to our national temperament for a system of which the most conspicuous product was the German Empire.

During the war an educational reformer could find no more effective argument to console war-burdened taxpayers for the expensiveness of his fancies than by the suggestion that part of his scheme was fashioned on German models, by copying which we might hope to attain the efficiency of our enemies. This is simply the old superstitious belief in the superiority of German methods which, as we shall see presently, deluded two generations of Englishmen. We were constantly told that the secret of German supremacy was the superior quality of German education. There was no need to remind us of the inferior quality of our own, especially in the elementary schools. After millions of public money spent on elementary instruction since the Education Act was passed nearly half a century ago, not one English child in a hundred learns even to pronounce the English language. Those

who have supervised the correspondence of our brave soldiers on the battle-line can further testify to the slender literary results of our costly system. Nevertheless our uneducated soldiers have beaten the best educated armies the world has ever seen.

Superior education in Germany was organised to produce a highly instructed body of officers to command disciplined and well-taught hordes which came from the secondary and elementary schools. Yet our improvised levies under officers who had received only the education and military training which Germans despised, or no training at all, were more efficient than the scientifically instructed enemy. At first we were outnumbered by colossal armies, the produce of forty years' rigid training. At first we were hesitating in the art of war—though with the French we out-manœuvred the experienced enemy at the first battle of the Marne. But after three years of warfare our civilian soldiers, who took the place of the little regular army which had nobly died, proved themselves man for man superior to the Germans. Our British Germanisers also extolled the practical superiority of German scientific education. In that domain, likewise, we have won. When the German

chemists invented a poisoned gas as an irregular weapon of war, our chemists retorted by inventing a still more formidable vapour. Then there was the creation by our mechanical engineers of the tanks—and so on in every department of the war, our casually educated Britons beat at every turn the best educated nation in Europe.

But, say our impenitent dilettanti, the intrinsic beauties of German culture are so transcendent that, though they brought the Fatherland to ruin, we ought not to refrain from imitating them. They especially admire the system whereby the elementary schools formed a stepping-stone to the middle or to the continuation schools, and thence to the Gymnasias and the universities, with the professoriate as the supreme reward. The chief result of the adoption of an analogous scheme in England, would be to increase the already large class of 'minor-honours men' at the universities, who are qualified for little else than the overcrowded calling of secondary school-mastering, of which the pinched existence has become a tragedy in our social system. To reconstruct devastated civilisation after the victory, we need reforms more practical than costly schemes for the academical

extension of elementary education. A generation of youth is needed, in all classes of the community, trained early in the technical business of life—which has increased a hundredfold in importance, owing to the wondrous development of the mechanical age during the war. So in the critical plastic years the mass of our adolescents must not be taught that their highest aim is to attain that artificial standard of instruction which may lead to an exhibition at a university—and as a rule to nothing beyond, except disillusion and straitened mediocrity.


What an ambitious and disillusioned Briton, whatever his social origin, would consider straitened mediocrity, quite contents the requirements of Germans who aspire to the higher ranks of the teaching profession. Poorly paid, even according to our lowest tariffs, they lead lives of mean hardship, aided by the self-denying drudgery of their submissive wives. Their learning is often profounder than that of better paid Englishmen of the corresponding class; but their culture is not productive of social amenity or even of personal cleanliness. The intellectual life of these insanitary savants did not civilise their native conception of humanity, and the most eminent of them in the ingenuous arts



became the most savage apologists for brutality when war laid bare the innate character of all the combatants. The records of the Institute of France bear witness to this. Four of its Academies have the power to confer honorary membership on a limited number of foreigners. Most magnanimously the Institute extended that high distinction to the impenitent enemies of France. If philosophy and the humanities failed to soften uncouth nationality, better things were expected from art and music which knew no frontiers. But the painters, sculptors and musicians of Germany so loudly exulted in the barbarous destruction of the library at Louvain and of the cathedral at Reims that, before 1914 ended, the important group of them who belonged to the Académie des Beaux Arts were unceremoniously expelled. The other Academies followed this example, when the German philosophers, scholars and scientists who had received the highest honour France can pay to foreigners, signed the infamous document *An die Kulturwelt*, to justify outrages on women, torture of prisoners, and the usual Hunnish rapine. These notables, of whom the French Institute purged itself, were the finest flower of Teutonic 'culture.' That word, which we once associated with the

urbane apostolate of Matthew Arnold, now recalls the excesses of a rude barbarism which would have vexed his fastidious soul.

The condonation of savage atrocities was not the only patriotic mission inspired by *Kultur* during the war. Previously the idealists of the Education Office in the Unter den Linden and of the German universities had seen that the United States of America offered a fine ground for the cultivation of Germanism in a nation containing a very large element of Teutonic origin. By a system of 'exchange-professors,' arranged between the German universities and those of the United States, a subtle effort was making progress, when the war began, to convert American students of the higher grades into intellectual subjects of Germany. At last the government of the United States declared war on Germany, whose propagandists were henceforth less free to 'travailler pour le roi de Prusse.' On the fourth anniversary of the battle of the Marne, Dr. Charles Eliot of Harvard, my eminent confrère of the French Institute, published a letter in England, exposing this German attempt to permeate the American universities with admiration for German methods and ethics.



The *Times* newspaper, in an article on Dr. Eliot's letter, referred to the fact well known to all students of modern Germany, that 'Prussia-Germany for years has corrupted the German professoriate with orders, ribands and signs of Court favour, and debauched it into a willing and servile instrument.' This fact would have now only a retrospective interest, had not our democratic rulers imposed upon us this evil tradition of the ruined German Empire on a much more profuse scale affecting every section of the community. It is needless to say that titles and ribands are not in England 'signs of Court favour,' as the sovereign is not responsible for the wholesale distribution of 'honours,' which has dishonoured the government and the nation. Nor would it be true to say that the minor titles accepted by notables of our independent universities have 'debauched' those learned persons. Nevertheless it is a pity that the holders of time-honoured academic titles, which have been handed on in proud succession for half a thousand years, should accept, and use in preference to their historic designations, titles more appropriate for the worshipful Mayor in his counting-house on King's Parade or 'the High,' than for dignified Heads of Houses. Perhaps no other

harm is done to them than a certain loss of dignity. But their alacrity in submitting is serious as a symptom of the rage for titles and ribands which, encouraged by all the governments of this century, has affected during the war thousands of our non-combatant citizens.

The multiplicity of decorations and titles is an appropriate means of cajolery under a military autocracy such as the German Empire. It is out of place in a democratic State, except for the purpose of confirming sceptics in their incredulity as to the democratic aims of democratic government. Also, it was a defiance of good taste to decorate and promote civilians in the midst of a tragic war, service in which ought to have been the only consideration for honorific distinction during its progress. Here the French set us a good example. The Republic confers no titles on its citizens, but it had become lavish in the distribution of decorations. Twice a year long lists were issued of civilian recipients of different grades in the Legion of Honour, supplemented by longer lists of those who had to be content with 'les Palmes' and other inferior Orders. But they came to an end with the war, during which no decorations were conferred, except for military service. If France



relinquished its customary honours-lists, from a sense of their unfitness during the war, it is anomalous that we who have only recently submitted to profuse distributions of 'honours' should have made the war a pretext for multiplying them by the thousand. In spite of the mourning homes of England, English politicians have taken the tragedy of the war less seriously than the French, who for year after year were face to face with the enemy devastating their soil.

The invention and distribution, by thousands, of the ribands of the Order of the British Empire has been so decried, that there is no need to say much about it here. It is absurd, according to our old standards of good taste. In one case the riband was sent to an already 'honoured' municipal official, with the request that he would confer it on the worthiest of his local acquaintance. But it is not more absurd than the protest made against it by a band of titled persons afraid of the value of their dignities being depreciated by so large an accession to the decorated class. The protest, supported by the names of certain recently promoted signatories, displayed the egoist lack of urbanity of the successful *arriviste*, always ready to shout at those he has outrun: 'You are

not as good as I am.' It is the old story of 'la pelle qui se moque du fourgon,' already ancient when Mme de Sévigné related it, and it will be often repeated in various forms in the annals of a decorated democracy. It may be demoralising for a modest official to be exalted over his fellow clerks by the fifth class riband of the British Empire. But it was much more demoralising when the Grand Cross of older Orders was conferred, actually during the war, on lawyers for their comfortable and overpaid services, while heroic and poorly-paid generals who helped to save England with their courage and skill, often at the cost of wounds and infirmity, had to be grateful for the minor grades of the same Orders. It was not to have lawyers and politicians glorified above their brave chiefs that our beloved boys died, the vast majority without even the small recognition of a military cross or medal.

When the British government was the envy of the world we were a proud nation, willing that others should imitate our institutions (not always to their advantage) but disdaining to adopt those of other people, whether our equals, as were the French, or our inferiors, as were the Prussians. The *mot* attributed to Talleyrand

as to the superior distinction of Castlereagh, at the Congress of Vienna, because he wore no decorations is legendary. But for a century it was believed and quoted because contempt for decorations, except those won on the battlefield (which were very tardily distributed in those days), was recognised in Europe as the mark of the Englishman who needed no riband to assert the dignity of his citizenship. That the repudiation of that dignified tradition is due to the mania of our democratic rulers for imitating German things is seen in the curious incident of the institution of the Order of Merit in 1902. As every political 'honour' from a knighthood to a peerage could be bought, there might be some excuse for inventing a becoming distinction for men of war, of learning, and of art, provided politicians were excluded. Yet the necessity for a new Order was not apparent. The Grand Cross of the Bath was a worthy certificate of useful service, until Disraeli vulgarised it by conferring it on 'Mr. Secretary Cross, whom I always forget to call Sir Richard,' and on other politicians—a bad example quickly followed by the Liberal party. England is the only great country where ministers decorate ministers and ex-ministers, a practice unknown in France

where persons of ministerial rank, past and present, are the least decorated class in the nation. So in any new order devised for the recognition of exceptional talent or civic virtue there would obviously be no place for politicians. Moreover it was essential that any such distinction should be purely British in its nature and origin. The new Order failed in both essentials. Politicians were included among the first members of an Order which was an obsequious imitation of the Prussian Order of Merit. As has been already remarked, it is a pity that advisers of the British Crown rarely have any knowledge of life and sentiment on the Continent. Hence their blunders in matters which seem trifling to them, while foreigners consider them of high importance. Just as our gift of Heligoland to the Germans, instead of conciliating them, filled them with scorn for our weakness, so in the imitation of a Prussian Order they saw a sign of our inferiority. For by adopting it the British government put England in the posture of a minor German principality. Waldeck and Oldenburg each had its Order of Merit, copied from ascendant Prussia. So now it was the turn of England when the autocrat of Germany was a king of Prussia, who fancied himself to be



peculiarly the heir of the founder of the Order, —Frederick ‘called the Great.’

It so happened that one of the first batch of members of the imported Order knew the value in foreign eyes of a counterfeit Prussian decoration, he being connected by marriage with continental courts. He was an accomplished man, and so ingenuous that he fancied that a peerage might be a fitting reward for the intellectual labours of a lifetime. His invitation to accept, instead, this new German toy was the supreme mortification of a useful life. Less tragic was the misinterpretation in France of the initials ‘O. M.’ which the members of this Order use according to the puzzling practice which impels Englishmen to tack portions of the alphabet to their names, to advertise their means of livelihood, their education, or their chivalry. In France such initials are used by institutions, not by persons, and if any one concerned in the importation of the Prussian Order of Merit had had the least acquaintance with Parisian life even to the extent of reading the French newspapers, he would have vetoed the letters ‘O. M.’ as a symbol of dignity which might one day be offered to a Frenchman. For ‘les O. M.’ is a frequent heading in French journals, both

in peace and in war-time, as it denotes a sanitary grievance which never ceases to exercise the Parisian. The initials O. M. stand for *Ordures Ménagères*, or household refuse, the deposit of which in iron boxes (called 'Poubelles,' after the Préfet of the Seine who authorised them), placed on the pavements in the hours of darkness, is a subject of livelier interest in Paris than is the Order of Merit in London. It may be respectfully suggested that as some of the members of this Order are men of eminence, including gallant soldiers and sailors who have fought the German, they ought to be relieved of a designation which is both Prussian and equivocal. Seeing that the most august family in the Empire has divested itself of a surname of long historic tradition, solely because of its Germanic origin, surely the name might be changed of a thing imported from Berlin twelve years before the war.

Since these lines were written the advisers of the British Crown have conferred this Prussian decoration on two renowned French marshals, who led the allied forces to victory. It is submitted with great deference that something ought to be done to attenuate this mistake. The initials of the Order of Merit, with their grotesque associations in France, are of relatively small

importance. But to make deliberate choice of a newly imported Order from Germany for the decoration of marshals of France who led French and British to the conquest of the Huns was a singular proceeding on the part of our government, which had at its disposal ancient distinctions of native origin quite worthy of doing honour to the illustrious French commanders. French people who love us (and their love is worth cultivating) have a special reverence for our surviving institutions of ancient tradition. So if instead of this new riband, which twelve years before the war was exclusively of German manufacture, our government had conferred the Garter on the victorious Marshals, the compliment would have thrilled France. If the statutes of the Order oppose the admission of subjects of a foreign power they were nevertheless construed in favour of a subject of the Kaiser, who combined in England the functions of a German spy and of a Knight of the Garter. So it would revive the prestige of the time-worn order of chivalry, now almost monopolised by conspicuously unwarlike persons, if a brilliant French warrior occupied the stall at St. George's of the unchivalrous German prince who abused the laws of hospitality.

If any British member of the original Prussian Order of Merit still retains this sign of the Kaiser's personal esteem he should hasten to send it back to the forlorn chancery at Berlin, unless indeed he is reluctant to separate himself from friends of Germany whom also the Grand Master delighted to honour—such as the Bulgarian commander-in-chief, Jekoff, who on his sickbed at Vienna heard of the capitulation of his army, when he was wearing 'pinned to his breast the Prussian Order of Merit, with the highest decorations of Bulgaria and Turkey'—a suitable juxtaposition.

Closely connected with our imitation of vanquished Germany in the multiplication of decorations is the reckless growth during the war of a colossal bureaucracy, which Prussia might envy, but for one British characteristic—its wanton and wasteful extravagance. This again is an example of our imitation of what was worst in Germany, with the addition of evils not found in the Prussian system, in which efficiency and frugal economy were essential features. In the mad rage of our democratic rulers to complete the financial ruin of the country crippled by the cost of the war, London parks were disfigured with ignoble hovels and streets were depopulated to make room for



hordes of new functionaries, including able-bodied men withdrawn from the defence of the realm, and crowds of young women whose first experience in public life was to learn what economists mean by 'unproductive industry.' For these damsels, when Europe was ablaze, were set to practise the ancient pastimes of Whitehall and Somerset House, which of old did relatively little harm, because the players were few. In battalions they were taught to copy, to docket, to minute, to file and to register, applying these operations to what are called by the French (who know the system well) *sotties paperasses*. Many of these young women were admirable in their self-denial and diligence, their motive for entering the public service being often the example of their gallant relatives who had died or suffered on the battlefield. Some of them were of intelligence superior to that of the men who supervised them, and if only a tenth of their number had been put to useful practical work, the nation would have economised much money and trained a new intellectual force.

The growth of bureaucracy during the war has another serious aspect. It has been supported by politicians who have declared that it was 'to

put down militarism,' that the youth of the Empire has perished, implying that the cruel sacrifice is a price paid for securing a regime of liberty. This means only that these politicians prefer an autocratic system under which they enjoy or compete for lucrative place and 'honours,' to another autocratic system under which they would not have those advantages. For bureaucracy is as incompatible with representative government as is militarism. This is seen in France, where for over a century, surviving revolutions and changes of executive, from constitutional monarchy to empire and from empire to republic, the Napoleonic fabric of centralised administration has continued to be the basis and framework of government. As the nation has come to regard this organised bureaucracy, which admirably suits its temperament, as an essential part of its existence, it cannot be abolished or radically reformed. So as it contains the machinery of absolutism ready for a strong hand to manipulate, the parliamentary Republic has found a remedy in ministerial instability, so that an ambitious and able minister may not hold the wires long enough to prepare the way for dictatorship. This is why the Third Republic has never got rid of

its initial weakness of ministerial instability. Even since this century began in 1901, France has had nineteen ministries under thirteen different prime ministers, and in the last four years of the war there were six ministries under five prime ministers. The abnormally long tenure of office by the last of these, M. Clemenceau, was due to his remarkable personality, which the war revealed in his old age. But that would not have prevented the fall of his ministry, had not his presence at the head of the French government been essential to the allies.

Bureaucracy is an older institution in France than parliamentary government, which had to be super-imposed on the centralised administrative system. In England the Parliament is as old as the nation, while bureaucracy is the interloper. So its establishment on a large scale in our country, with incidental features of German pattern, will have inconvenient results, unlike anything experienced in France. Our condition will be worse than that of our great ally. Formerly it was said that France was eaten up by its functionaries and England by its lawyers. If as a result of the war the remnant saved from the appetite of our great predatory legal class is to be devoured by a

hungry bureaucracy the sacrifice of the young generation will indeed have been in vain.

The cost to the war-burdened taxpayers of the newly extended bureaucracy is only one of its evils. The British Civil Service has been the best and the most independent in the world, in spite of its red-tapeism which, under changed conditions, seems likely to survive its better qualities. Its limited numbers enhanced its efficiency. Its independence was due to the high ability and experience of its superior members which enabled them to be the self-effacing masters, though nominally the subordinates, of the politicians placed temporarily at the head of departments of the State, who, of late years, have been with a few notable exceptions persons of mediocre talent, save in the art of 'getting on.' This small body of civil servants has been rapidly transformed into an ever-growing multitude of officials, which promises to become a powerful class in the community—a disciplined bodyguard of the politicians forming the government, on whom the appointment and promotion of functionaries depend. When we see, coincident with the rise of this bureaucratic class, the wholesale distribution of decorations and titles, we are evidently witnessing a state of



things resembling that stigmatised in the article of the *Times* already quoted, which told how Germany, with orders and ribands 'debauched into a willing and servile instrument,' the best educated sections of its public service.

When this passage was cited, care was taken to point out that titles and ribands in our country are not 'signs of Court favour,' as the decorations in Germany were described to be by the writer of the article. It is of importance to make it clear, that the Crown of England is not responsible for the broadcast distribution of 'honours,' and for the scandals arising therefrom—especially from the sale of titles to persons less worthy than civil servants. When in House of Commons debate member after member can assert, uncontradicted, that titles have been conferred on 'men of bad character'; when Canada disdainfully protests against the bestowal of British titles on citizens of our great Dominion, it is time to speak out in the interests of the monarchy on which the Empire depends. It cannot be too distinctly affirmed that, except in very rare cases, the recipient of a title or a decoration who announces that he has been 'honoured with a signal mark of favour from the sovereign,' is making a boast which has no relation with the truth.

While the sovereign, deemed to be 'the fountain of honour,' has little to do with the selection of the persons titled or decorated, the arrogation by ministers of unprecedented autocratic power in this matter displays the inconvenience arising from the importation into a free country of an instrument of influence which is compatible only with absolutism of the German imperial type. These observations have not in view any particular minister. Successive ministers for some time have practised the bad system with increasing licence, until during the war the heavy showers of honours poured upon non-combatants became an avalanche which still goes on growing. A Canadian officer who sacrificed everything but life in fighting for the Empire, when speaking of the deep hostility to titles in the Dominion, described very forcibly the posture of our ministers of the new school, and the mischief it did to the relations of the Colonies with the Mother Country. He said : 'We cannot allow a British party-politician under the shadow of the royal prerogative to meddle with the social organisation of Canada, especially as we know that British ministers sell titles for money which, paid into party funds, is used for their eventual benefit.'

Under the shadow of the royal prerogative, the British party-politician is upsetting, in an undemocratic sense, great constitutional traditions of which our statesmen of the past were proud to be the guardians. Jealously limiting the prerogatives of the Crown they scrupulously refrained from usurping them, unlike the smaller men of our generation. The 'forties' of the last century were years of unusual political and party activity. In the previous decade a large creation of peers had been for a moment mooted, to secure the passing of the Reform Bill. Yet the recent contingency of such an increase of the House of Lords did not move the prime ministers of Queen Victoria to advise numerous creations of peers for their own or their parties' advantage—though neither Sir Robert Peel in the Bed-Chamber Plot, nor Lord John Russell in his whiggish lectures to the Queen on the statutory origin of her crown, had shown excessive reverence for the royal prerogative. Nevertheless, in the ten years succeeding 1840, only nine commoners were raised to the peerage.

Those were the days when peerages were not articles of commerce. Under the system of venality and of indiscriminate reward of party-hacks, in a like space of ten years, preceding

the peace of 1919, 130 commoners were raised to the peerage, about half of whom were ennobled during the war. Two only of them had fought in the war (though it was announced at the conclusion of peace that several other soldiers and sailors would receive peerages), and they ought to have been the only British subjects so promoted while the war was going on, in the opinion of most of us who approve of the French practice mentioned above. It would be a generous estimate to say that thirty of them were men of high distinction and character who had rendered great service to the Empire. Of the remaining hundred, half bore names which conveyed no idea to their fellow citizens ; some of the others were known as having made money in commerce, law, or politics, while here and there an ennobled name seemed to echo the sombre verse :—

*‘ Ille crucem sceleris pretium tulit, hic diadema. ’*

As so many of these peerages have been created during or since the war, as well as a much larger crowd of baronetcies and knighthoods similarly conferred on civilians, together with the bestowal on the same class of thousands of minor decorations, chiefly of an Order invented during the war, this unprecedented flood of ‘honours’



must be regarded as a direct result of the war. Yet of our countless young heroes who died unrewarded on the battlefield or in hospital, not one offered his precious life to enable a politician to confer rank and title on legions of non-combatants, to the advantage of his own position. It is an organic perversion of the British nation. Yet its supporters say that the voice of the people ratified it at the first consultation of the electorate under universal suffrage. But the question of this abuse of power was never placed before the new electorate. Indeed at that hurried and abnormal election all questions were kept in abeyance except one. The only question submitted to the new electors, bewildered with the war, was whether for the concluding of the peace they preferred to be represented by a politician in power, or by a rival politician of the same party whom the other had driven out of office. So the fraction of the new electorate which threw off its indifference sufficiently to go to the poll, voted for the cleverer of the two candidates, though it had little love for or confidence in either.

It is important to note that if the defeated politician had been reinstated in office by the popular vote, there is no ground for supposing

that his policy with regard to the bestowal of 'honours' would have been more wholesome than that of the successful competitor. For unhappily, whatever the political creed of party leaders, they are always united in an unholy solidarity for the maintenance of the autocracy of the executive in the traffic of 'honours.' On other questions party-politicians have attacked their opponents with insulting bitterness. In the Marconi affair one set accused the other of dishonesty—which later did not prevent accusers and accused from mutually giving and accepting profitable favours, without any withdrawal of imputations. In many another debate the angriest passions were displayed 'on party lines.' Yet, even before Coalition changed the character of front benches, there was one subject which united the chiefs of government and opposition in affectionate sympathy. If a misguided member, of whatever party, dared to criticise the purchase of titles, the harmonious front benches intimated that it would have been good for that man if he had not been born—to parliamentary life—he being a traitor to the sacred craft of office-holders, which has principles independent of political doctrines and a code of honour of its own.

It has been remarked that in Parliament the Labour Party made no protests against this policy, although its members profess to be austere adversaries of class distinction. During the war there were Labour members in the ministry under which these symbols of social privilege were bestowed broadcast. Yet not one of these advanced democrats resigned office to show his disapproval of the abuse. In the new Parliament they have observed the same silence. Also, when a Royal Commission was appointed to examine the socialistic claims of coal miners, the most conspicuous advocate of the workers came adorned with a new knighthood to prove his proletarianism. Some Labour leaders say that these things do not matter, as they will all be swept away in the coming revolution. On the other hand, politicians who support the wholesale bestowal of civilian honours, whether sold or given, suggest that the newly titled and decorated class may form a phalanx to defend the country from revolution. Even though the civilian chivalry, led by the new nobility, should become an army 20,000 strong, it would not count for much as a fighting force against a popular revolution. Moreover, many persons invested with minor honours, far from being

confirmed in their loyalty, are rebelliously jealous of recipients of higher honours. One case is cited of a millionaire, who having a past too notorious even for a party-whip to condone, was refused the peerage which he thought was included in the price he paid for another distinction ; and he has since expressed sentiments frankly bolshevist.

A minister largely responsible for this wholesale imitation of a bad German institution had risen to prominence by the vehemence of his democratic professions, the targets for his heaviest missiles being titles and the persons who bore them. Had he remained consistent on this subject, he would have lost none of the support of the sober opinion of the nation, which he earned by his energetic prosecution of the war, and he might perhaps have retained the confidence of the proletariat and have been able to withdraw its leaders from influences which are not primarily patriotic. It seemed as though an opportunity were spoiled of possibly uniting under one leadership the whole strength of British democracy, and of saving a large section of it from the contagion of international anarchy.

The profuse multiplying of titles in England is an ironical result of a war won by our alliance



with the republics of France and America which do not confer them on their citizens. With the disappearance of the continental empires we shall be able to boast that England and Japan are the only great powers which produce this species of distinction. The multiplicity of titles and decorations is not an element of strength in the modern State. In our country, apart from the serious questions of venality and of the destination of the money paid for 'honours,' it gives the impression of being an organised system to fetter the independence of parliament and to complete the disrepute which has fallen upon it. Together with the unprecedented crowd of paid ministers, there are now in the House of Commons, elected by the most democratic franchise ever known, so many members who have been titled or decorated by the government that the two categories form a working majority of mercenaries. There is therefore no control on reckless waste in every department of the all-absorbing State, at a crisis when stern economy could alone prevent the crushing cost of the war from bringing the nation to ruin. What England needs in return for the sacrifice of her sons, is not the gratification of the vanity of party politicians and of other complacent citizens,

who flaunt their new tinsel with untimely rejoicing in the midst of a bereaved and embarrassed nation. That nation needs honest statesmanship and sound finance. It is easier to create a hundred peers and a thousand knights than to produce one able financier, and unless a saviour of the country is found in that form our young generation will have died in vain.

It is not easy to understand why an ambitious politician should have assumed the odium of this demoralising policy. While it may have been a profitable piece of electioneering strategy, endowing a minister with a temporary sense of absolute power as a dispenser of unprecedented largesse, it could not invest him with more than a transient semblance of autocracy—than which there are many more substantial rewards within the reach of a successful British politician. Yet there are critics who fear that this defiant usurpation of the royal prerogative, coincident with the development of Germanic state-socialism, may lead to dictatorship. There is no need for their fears. Even though ministerial autocracy should continue for a time as an untoward result of the war, while it will be demoralising and inconvenient for the British nation, it can never lead to dictatorship, even in the restricted sense

that the President of the United States is an autocratic ruler during his troubled term of office. Still less could it lead to a dictatorship like that which the first exercise of manhood suffrage in France gave to Louis Napoleon. A popular vote in France could make a man the absolute chief of a homogeneous State administered by one centralised government. A popular vote in Great Britain, in the most improbable event of its investing a politician with unlimited personal power, could make him master of only a small area of the British Empire. Even though a *magister populi*, of the civil and military genius of Cromwell, were to arise in this island—of which apparition there is no sign—his ambitions would be circumscribed by the unique composition of the British Empire. Whatever a British minister's temporary popularity at home, or his ascendancy in the House of Commons, which may for a season encourage him to assume attributes of autocracy more conformable to German temperament than to British, he will have neither power nor constitutional status in our overseas dominions, and only that official influence which the free colonies tolerate in the nomination of their governors. In the past the Colonists, as they were then called, had a certain

reverence for the names of Peel and Palmerston and Gladstone. To-day, in the words already quoted of a Canadian, the Prime Minister of England to our fellow-citizens beyond the seas, is only a 'British party-leader,' of no higher prestige in their eyes than their own much-criticised politicians, in or out of office. Moreover the relative official importance of the English Prime Minister is bound to diminish in the near future when, as is likely, some scheme of federal government of the Empire is adopted. The temporary occupant of Downing Street will then be only *primus inter pares* in the group of prime ministers of the federated Empire.

Those who fear that ministerial autocracy may lead to dictatorship, have a vague apprehension that, amid the downfall of European thrones and dynasties, a republic may one day be established in England, with an ambitious politician as its president. This is an ancient delusion which was much more rife in the days when the most powerful and popular ministers eschewed all tendency to assume autocratic authority. At that time Mr. Chamberlain, then a democratic leader outside Parliament, wrote in 1871: 'The Republic must come, and at the rate we are moving it will come in our generation.'



Before his generation had passed the imperial policy to which he subsequently adhered had become a sure safeguard against the realisation of his republican fancies. For even if the wave of republicanism which the war has let loose on the Continent were to reach the shores of this island, it could not touch the British Empire, except in the sense of destroying it, because there would be no British Empire to touch from the moment that our monarchy was replaced by a republic. A president of a British Republic, though he were acclaimed by the unanimous voice of a demented Great Britain, would not be recognised for an hour by Canada or Australia, and the Empire would be dissolved, if it lost its binding symbol, the Imperial Crown.

While there is no prospect of such a catastrophe, it is necessary for the better security and consolidation of the Empire, that certain prerogatives assumed by British ministers in the name of the Crown should be modified. Even if the consent of the House of Commons were made essential in such matters as the bestowal of titles or the conclusion of treaties, that would not suffice. Our great oversea States must be consulted on all questions which concern them, even indirectly (such as the surrender of Heligoland which

incidentally cost the life of many a Canadian and Anzac) ; and now that space and time have been conquered by mechanical inventions, there will be no difficulty in arranging such consultations.

While one direct result of the war has been to increase the importation into England of undesirable or unsuitable German institutions, the ground had been previously prepared for them. The growth of German influence in England is a long story. Of late there has been an excessive tendency to attribute its origin to the sympathy and action of Queen Victoria—though to her prestige the Empire owed its consolidation, German jealousy of which was one of the chief causes of the war. To those who were brought up to reverence the Queen, with a sort of patriotic religion, it is painful to be told that ‘in her reign Windsor Castle was a Prussian agency.’ A short examination of the genesis of such impressions may throw some light on our imitative admiration for Germany, which developed long after the death of Queen Victoria, and which reached its height actually during the war when we were sacrificing our young generation for the purpose of destroying Germanism.

Our imitative admiration for German institutions may be partly traced to the memory of the exemplary character of the Prince Consort. The young Queen was bound to marry a German prince. There was no precedent for the marriage of an English queen with a subject, and by statute her husband had to be a Protestant. All Catholic princes, such as the three sons of Louis-Philippe, who were marriageable at the time of the Queen's wedding, in February 1840 (one of whom married a Saxe-Coburg cousin of the Queen) were ineligible. In a field so limited, the choice she made was admirable, and any other might have brought the British monarchy into peril. Through seven generations, since the beautiful and intrepid Elizabeth, daughter of James I., married the timorous Elector Palatine in 1613, Queen Victoria's descent was more purely German than that of her Consort. Though their home-life was naturally affected by the German education of the Prince, the Court loyally refrained from exercising Germanic influence on the nation, and set an example of constitutional domesticity. Two of the evils which we have noted as being imported from Germany in this century are a swollen bureaucracy and an outrageous distribution of titles and decorations. Neither

the Queen nor her husband had anything to do with the undue increase of the Civil Service, which had hardly begun at the end of her long widowhood. As for titles, she always set her face against their wholesale bestowal—'the Queen has written a philippic against the creation of peers,' wrote Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone in 1869—and the period we have noted, when the average creation of peerages was less than one each year, was precisely the first decade of her married life. In art the royal couple preferred the light Italian opera of Bellini and Donizetti, to the new German music of Richard Wagner; and if the Prince Consort encouraged the portrait painting of Winterhalter, it must be remembered that the Teutonic artist was also the favourite painter of the Court of the Tuileries.

Then the virtuous Prince died. While he lived, he was not popular in England, as may be seen in the contemporary caricatures of *Punch*, which also reflect the contempt which the British public had for Germans in general. After his death his merits obtained a magnified recognition, and the heart of every Englishwoman went out to the widowed Queen in her bereavement. From admiring the serious virtues of



the Prince, the nation, as memoirs of his life were published, was led to admire the German system of which he was the product. So loyal British parents brought up their infants on the moral and constitutional precepts (translated into English) of Baron Stockmar, which displayed the beauties of the soul of Germany, and for a moment he became the Mr. Barlow, for advanced pupils, of the mid-Victorian age. Yet it may be doubted if a single English child was made to learn the German language as a consequence of the posthumous cult of Prince Albert.

It is now urged against the memory of the Prince, that while he acted constitutionally as a Consort, in a position of great difficulty, he remained a patriotic German, and his influence on the Queen was a determining cause of England's abstention from a policy which would have checked the dominating rise of Prussia. He died in 1861, the year that William I. became king, and nine months before he brought Bismarck to Berlin, threatening to abdicate if he refused to be his minister. So the Prince did not see the advent to power of Bismarck, which initiated a new era in the world's history. But he was aware of the ambitions of Prussia. Even before the Crimean War, his Prussian friend,

Bunsen, was sneering at 'the stiff unbelief of the English in the future of Germany.' To that future he held that England should not be an obstacle. So at the end of 1859, after the Italian war, when Palmerston seemed to favour a British alliance with France and Italy to complete the withdrawal of Austria from Italian territory, we find Prince Albert protesting against this policy which he said, 'must lead to our being the allies of France in her attack on the Rhine, should Germany not abandon Austria a second time.' The Prince Consort's doctrine was, that a war between England and Prussia was an unthinkable contingency, in the same way that many English people have regarded the possibility of hostilities between England and the United States. With reminiscences of the Romantic movement of his boyhood, the Prince may have cherished dreams of a liberalised benign Germany ; but he was quite familiar with the teaching of Sybel and of the band of able imperialistic historians who since 1848 were preparing the way for Prussian supremacy.

Yet it would be unjust to attribute entirely to Prince Albert's memory the support given by the Queen to the first demonstration of Bismarckian

policy when she resisted Palmerston's threat of armed interference in the Schleswig-Holstein affair of 1864. There were living influences at work which moved her to prevent England from restraining Prussia and Austria in their predatory onslaught upon Denmark. In May 1863 her uncle and adviser, King Leopold, warning her of the ills that would attend the restoration of Poland wrote: 'To carry on a war for that purpose would be for England a fool's play. A Poland restored would be in close alliance with France; and Prussia, between the French on the Rhine and a French province on the Vistula, could not exist. . . . England has a vital interest for its own security that Prussia and Austria should continue to maintain their existence.' Thus spake two years before he died, the most astute German of the nineteenth century, except Bismarck. After losing, by the death of Princess Charlotte his first wife, his ambitious chance of being King of England (to be a William III., not a prince consort was his idea), he had pushed on his family to European thrones, and other descendants of the Coburgs were coming on, while he had secured for himself a comfortable new kingdom, from which he pulled the wires of Europe. But he could not foresee that when

Prussia, whose prosperity he desired, had become so great that its king, half a Coburger by birth, was German Kaiser, his own Belgium, by the irony of fate, would be the first victim of the Prussian aggression of 1914, when Germany tore up the Treaty whereby Prussia and the other Powers had guaranteed the inviolability of Belgian territory.

The situation of Queen Victoria in the matter of the Elbe-Duchies was difficult. On the one hand the Princess Royal was the wife of the Crown Prince of Prussia. On the other, the Prince of Wales had just married the daughter of the Prince whose succession in the same year to the throne of Denmark was the signal for the Prusso-Austrian attack upon his kingdom. The young bride from Denmark was idolised by the British people, who disliked the Prussian marriage without knowing the extent of its banefulness—for it had already produced a dire progeny destined to be the scourge of the world. A war to defend little Denmark from the assault of two big bullies would have been popular in England. Yet the Queen was perhaps not wrong in resisting it. Apart from her dynastic sympathies, the issue of a war was not certain, because the enigmatic figure of Napoleon III. was then dominat-



ing Europe, and on his action no one could count. It was most doubtful if he would have joined England in making war on the German powers in the dispute about the Duchies. Moreover, whatever Queen Victoria, Prince Albert, and their uncle Leopold did to further Prussian aims, it was little to what Napoleon III. alone effected to promote German unity and the preponderance of Prussia, when he submitted to Bismarck's cajoleries and refused the chance of crushing Prussia by joining Austria in 1866.

We now know that Queen Victoria had misgivings about the conflict of her opinion with that of her people on the question of going to war to help Denmark. The Queen had a clear apprehension of the feeling of her subjects, and in May 1864 she wrote, by the hand of her stepsister, Princess Féodor Hohenlohe, to Prince Hohenlohe, the future German Chancellor, asking him to keep her confidentially informed upon German matters, as 'her husband's death had severed her connection with Germany,' and in particular, 'to explain the Schleswig-Holstein question, as this was not understood in England.' These communications were to be sent privately to the Queen through her step-sister, 'owing to

the suspicion with which all German influence in England was watched.’

That suspicion did not decrease, and during the Franco-German war, in which unfortunately there was no question of our interference, the feeling in the nation was so manifestly in favour of France and hostile to victorious Germany, that, recognising this, the Queen by an act which endeared her to her people, called forth a public anti-German demonstration. The monotony of German successes had been sometimes interrupted by the false report of a German defeat. So when the war was ending, the Queen announced that she was giving in marriage the fairest of her daughters to a very gifted British gentleman, Lord Lorne, instead of bestowing her hand on a German Highness. A wave of loyal joy passed over the whole nation, and was put into graphic form by Tenniel in his scathing cartoon, ‘A real German defeat’—which stung the Prussians into an itching to turn on us their armies which had conquered France.

Yet the Franco-German war failed to extinguish the legend of a serene and benignant Germany which, after its trials in the Napoleonic wars, had proved its character by producing a race of poets and philosophers, scholars and

musicians, of the type illustrated by Prince Albert. To commemorate his virtues, a costly monument was erected at Kensington, which artistically is worthy of the Thier Garten at Berlin. It included marble groups symbolising the quarters of the globe—from which Australia and other British dominions were omitted. In the European group Britannia, the Queen of the Ocean, was represented wielding a trident, with combative France leaning on an unsheathed sword ; but Germany mild and innocent :

‘*Timide en son aspect semblait Sainte-Nitouche.*’

In this piece of statuary, unveiled in 1872, after Bismarck’s policy of blood and iron had crushed and mutilated France, a British sculptor thought fit to delineate Germany as the muse of the sublime hymn, or the spirit of immaterial philosophy, pensively meditating the pages of a book, while her grosser sisters of England and France held in their hands the symbols of physical force.

That this was not the exclusive expression of a Court sculptor was seen in Carlyle’s jubilation when Paris was besieged—and he was not a courtier : ‘That noble, patient, deep and solid Germany should be at length welded into

a nation, and become queen of the continent, instead of vapouring, vain-glorious France, seems to me the hopefullest public fact that has occurred in my time.' From beyond the limits of the British Empire came another English eulogy of Germany the conqueror of France, which is less known, but is more curious as it was incidentally a commendation of the Lutheran religion by a Roman cardinal, and was deliberately published nineteen years after the war. In *Our Christian Heritage* Cardinal Gibbons, the respected Primate of the United States, related in 1889 how he was in France in 1870, when the war began, and was grieved to find the French soldiers forgetful of the faith: 'The German Emperor on the contrary was accustomed to invoke the aid of Heaven on the eve of an engagement. On the evening before the battle of Sedan, the chant that filled the air was not the song of ribaldry, but the glorious hymn *Nun danket alle Gott*.' We have all some recollection of the grandson of that prayerful warrior invoking the aid of Heaven in a more recent war, happily with less success. If the venerated Cardinal of Baltimore is ever able again to visit his friends in Europe, he will perhaps go to his much-tried brother, Cardinal Mercier at Malines,




with whom he can discuss the effects of choral hymnology on the German soul, as manifested in Belgium at the massacre of priests at Louvain, of babies at Dinant and of Edith Cavell at Brussels.

The Franco-German war put an end to all movements in this country to assail the position of Germany, now united in strength under the hegemony of Prussia. Never again was there disinterested opposition in England to the Prussianising of central Europe such as was roused by the Danish war. Not for a moment was Germany popular in England between 1871 and 1914, not even when we imported from its fortune-bringing army the spiked helmet, the *pikelhaube* which tortured and disfigured our infantry and artillery for a generation. But its unpopularity was now chiefly due to its growing rivalry of our commercial supremacy. The same causes which made it the object of our dislike made it also the object of our admiration. It was not now admired for the transcendental qualities praised at Chelsea, or symbolised by the nymph in the Albert Memorial. All the fine literature of Goethe and of Schiller added to all the beauties of the Romantic movement appealed less to British instinct than the success of Herr Ballin and his Hamburg American Com-

pany, or the progress of cosmopolitan financiers, in aiding Frankfort and Berlin to threaten the supremacy of the city of London. The barbarous music and the decadent philosophy of the last phase of the German Empire had little effect on the relations of the two nations ; though the 'spiritual' poison of the new German philosophy, sweetened with doses of imperial flattery administered to two or three obsequious Britons, was suffered to do material damage to the defence of our realm.

The growth of Germany in power and wealth, under its military autocracy, called forth in Great Britain that admiration which human beings accord to prosperity, without troubling themselves about its origin. No one acquainted with Germany will deny that there were points in its system which we might have adopted with advantage. But we rejected the good and imitated those which are appropriate to an autocratic regime—some of which have been enumerated : a fabric of state-socialism, a Prussianised school-system, a distended bureaucracy, a multiplication of titles and decorations. An autocracy was effective in Germany, being directed by the hand of one man, and was in harmony with the temperament of its people.



In our country it could never be anything but an evil, whatever its form. Before the war there were impartial spectators in England and in France who declared that the government of Germany was the best in the world. So far back as 1871, Lord Acton, explaining 'the extraordinary vigour of the Prussian State and the efficiency of its armies,' which had just produced the new German Empire, said : 'The government is so enlightened, the clearness of intellect is so apparent in its operations, that the people, educated and thoughtful as they are, consent to barter away some of the political privileges which the inhabitants of more free but less well-governed countries cherish. . . . The spell which holds Prussia captive is the charm of a good administration.' Acton was half a German, but he had a most judicial mind, as is shown in his treatment of the Roman Catholic Church, to which he belonged ; and if his rare writings on Germany had been better known in England, we should have been better prepared to deal with that country. Certainly up to the war the German Empire answered to the chief essentials of a good government, if the happiness of the people subject to a government is a test of its goodness. Under it the nation was prosperous

and contented, submitting to its restrictions more cheerfully than democracies submit to those restraints on liberty which all governments impose. But the Germans were idealists; so, not satisfied with practical prosperity, they threw it away, in fatuous pursuit of their vainglorious ideal: *Deutschland über Alles*.

In spite of the obvious popularity of the Imperial regime, some Englishmen talked and wrote as though the Germans, outside the mark of Brandenburg, were a people struggling to be free from Prussian militarism. Sometimes a fancy picture was drawn of oppression resembling that of the Scottish Lowlanders in Clydesdale, dragooned by Claverhouse and Charles the Second's lifeguards. Yet in the daylight of a summer's day, for the same price as a journey to Scotland, one had only to travel from London to Cologne to find in that great commercial city a prosperous and contented population devoted to its Prussian autocrat, proud of his army and overwhelmed with a sense of its own superiority, which it believed to be safeguarded by the military organisation of the Empire. This too was in the Rhenish province where in the past a Catholic population had resented its subjection to the Lutheran government of Prussia.



The legend current in England was due partly to ignorance, partly to insincerity; and the German socialists, whom some of our politicians regarded as a democratic party, nobly striving to assert the representative principle in a legislature under military restraint, gave them a pretty lesson on this subject. The united German nation proved itself to be the enthusiastic accomplice of the Kaiser and his military government, both in the knavish inception of the war, and in the brutality of its operations.

Whichever way English people looked at the relations of the Kaiser with his subjects, their admiration for the material prosperity of Germany obscured and compromised the national judgment—whether they hailed Germans as a virtuous people chained to a military autocracy, or whether, by their ministers and other prominent politicians, they were willing to strengthen that autocracy by making ill-advised concessions to it, which some of them, as we have seen, hoped would lead to an alliance of Great Britain with the German Empire. Both schools failed to see that if the system, under which Germany had become prosperous and powerful, called for their admiration, it was admirable as a whole—as a complete fabric of government and administra-

tion. So for us to imitate any part of it, detached from its directing authority, was to introduce into our body politic institutions which, efficient and appropriate portions of the machinery of authoritative government, could not fail to be mischievous in a system in which no dominating hand was recognised. For whatever the advantages, theoretical or practical, of autocratic government, the parliamentary system cannot be displaced by it in our country, even though the mother of parliaments has lost its prestige, its efficiency, and its representative character. The British nation, lethargic though it has become, would not submit to an ostensibly autocratic regime ; and even if, *par impossible*, it did give it a trial, the peculiar constitution of the British Empire would frustrate its establishment, just as it would stand in the way of a Republic—as we have already seen. But the British nation is incurring the risk of having to submit to a disguised autocracy, by adopting and developing institutions which, beneficial under the German Empire, must be pernicious under the forms of a representative system. We are already witnessing attempts ‘ to run the government of England as a one-man business.’ No politician could succeed in **this** unless he were a popular idol,

and no minister can retain popularity in a nation crushed with taxation and the dearness of life. So the extravagance of our politicians may in time limit their power for mischief—but not before they have dilapidated our finances more irremediably than were the finances of conquered France by the exactions of victorious Germany in 1871.

Such is the financial prospect which victory offers to England. It will grow darker if our politicians are not restrained from Germanising. They are adopting the Prussian theory, that the rights of the State should override those of the people. But they cannot add to the edifice of the all-powerful State the essential coping-stone of autocratic direction. 'The Kaiser in Commission' is the form of despotism in which our ministers and *ministrables* would like to take part, for the misgovernment of this nation. It would suit them better than it would suit British taxpayers, for whom it would be too expensive even in a nation inured to public waste and jobbery. More than one anti-monarchical writer in France has given impartial testimony of the superior economy of a government directed by one strong hand. There is M. Marcel Sembat, the socialist deputy, whose assertion has been already

quoted that under the Empire the German taxpayer knew that for every mark levied, a mark's worth of useful work was done, while under the parliamentary Republic the taxpayer knew that for every franc he paid, seventy-five centimes at least were misappropriated. France is, as we have seen, a country where a strong centralised administrative machine is ill-mated with the parliamentary system ; though it should be noted that the administrative system, being the issue of the individualist French Revolution, is free from the taint of State-socialism.

A more eminent French socialist has explained the uncomfortable truth exposed by M. Sembat—M. Anatole France who, though not a politician, is the most lucid of writers on political questions. He has pointed out that while, under an autocracy, the one man at the head takes a large sum of the public contributions, under a democracy the sharers of the spoil are very numerous ; and though no one of them would take nearly so much as the amount acquired by the sovereign autocrat, there were so many of them that the total diverted from the public funds was far in excess of the largest remuneration ever claimed by a monarch. It is no new story. Years ago old French Republicans who had disinterestedly



opposed the Second Empire and had lived to see the government of their dreams, were constrained to lament how pale and paltry was the famous corruption of the Empire compared with the lurid scandals of the Republic.

In England, for a hundred years at least, there was no profit to be made by politicians out of politics. The only political corruption was the bribery of electors, which on the contrary made politics a very costly pursuit. When that was stopped by legislation, a short period ensued, at the end of the last century, when an English writer, studying the political systems of France or of the United States could, with clean hands, advert to the existence of corruption in those countries. To-day no Briton can criticise the political morality of any other land from the heights of self-complacency. Outside parliamentary circles British opinion, when we shake off our fatal indifference, is in general agreement with the view taken by many persons of authority who are not politicians, to the effect that our politics are not now free from the taint of corruption. Thus Sir Henry Burdett in a moderate judgment of the situation after the war said : ' Money in politics is a curse. Of late years it has tended to overrun everything, to rob the

country of representative government and of democratic government also. Too many people have lived by politics and have advanced in politics by the possession of money.' The abasement of the moral standard of British politics simultaneously with the development in this country of State-socialism is a most evil coincidence. A vast bureaucracy is the essential complement of State-socialistic and nationalising schemes. This puts an inordinate amount of patronage in the hands of politicians, which is exceptionally dangerous at a time when a tolerance of loose financial morality is vitiating the political atmosphere. Under an autocratic regime the evil is less acute, the Chief of the State being compelled in his own interest to exercise a strong control over ministers and to check costly abuses which would involve his own person in unpopularity.

Years before our political system was open to the imputation of corruption, our government authorised reckless extravagance in vital matters wherein the German autocracy set us an example of efficient economy. As long ago as when we surrendered Heligoland all students of military questions knew that Germany's great army cost millions less than our little force. It was then

calculated that Germany for about 28 millions sterling a year could put into the field an army of two million men, while England at an annual cost of  $35\frac{1}{2}$  millions had only 150,000 men ready for immediate mobilisation—and the superior pay of the British soldier did not account for the colossal difference of cost. 'Colossal' seems an exaggerated term to use in these days, when our burdens are counted in thousands of millions ; but the importance of these relatively modest figures lies in the proportionate cost of the German army and our own. If our politics were pure at that time they contained the germ of corruption which might develop under a new system of government—such as has now taken the place of the old representative regime. For careless and spendthrift masters make wasteful servants, and wastefulness is a long step on the downward path towards malversation and dishonesty.

While the German institutions and practices imported by us can be worked efficiently and economically only under an autocratic government, there is no possibility of such a regime being established in our country. There were, however, features of German national life which

did not depend on autocratic government for their success and the consequent advantage to the community ; but, as has been already said, in our imitation of Germany we have chosen the evil and eschewed the good. Thus we failed to rival the superior expertness of German agents abroad and of their principals at home in extending, all the world over, the trade and industry of the Fatherland, to the detriment of our own. Gambetta told the French *commis-voyageurs* that they were ' ambassadors of commerce,' a term which can be more appropriately applied to German commercial travellers. No doubt the Imperial government favoured and fortified German trade and industry with all the means in its power, not only at home, but in every foreign land, by the organisation of a most efficient consular body. This would not have sufficed to put Germany on the way to the commercial conquest of the globe without the enterprise and the diligence of the traders and of the agents they sent abroad. In the forty years of German prosperity preceding the war, there is no reason whatever why British manufacturers and their representatives should have been inferior to their German rivals in the struggle for world-wide supremacy, but for our British



indolence and lack of initiative, notably displayed in the frequent inability of Englishmen to speak or to write any language but their own. Already, since the war ended, Australia tells us that Germany is making unabashed efforts to recapture its commerce. The future will soon reveal whether defeated Germany under a new regime will resume its peaceful victories over England victorious on the battlefield; or whether the British nation will realise that, bereft of its young generation, it needs an unprecedented effort to throw off its indolent apathy. For we cannot deny that one great reason why the Germans were beating us in the race for pacific prosperity was that they were more industrious than we. It is not likely that they will be lacking in this quality in the reconstruction of the Fatherland, which remains to them with its area in Europe very little diminished, and, by an unjust dispensation of Providence, untouched by devastation such as they brought into France. So it behoves us to imitate their chief legitimate weapons of aggression the force of which depends not on the direction of government.

There is another point on which we should have done well to take pattern from Germany. This is the question of 'town-planning' and

'housing.' The thoroughness with which the Germans carried out architectural operations in their cities was doubtless facilitated by their natural habit of compliancy to the orders of superior authority. But there is no reason whatever why our autonomous towns should have brought reproach upon the principle of self-government in their control of urban architecture. We may allow that among the eccentricities of modern architecture nothing is less æsthetic than the new German flamboyant style. But even so it is better than that of the mean buildings of no style whatever which deface some of the finest sites in England. We will not compare German cities rich in historical monuments with British cities similarly embellished. We will not go to stately Dresden or to picturesque Heidelberg, but to a commonplace business centre—Mannheim, at the head of the Rhine navigation, built on the ugliest German reach of that great stream, and we will not compare it with any British industrial town of gaunt unloveliness. We will compare it with the biggest city of pleasure in the British Empire and in the world. Brighton has no reason for existence except to be attractive. Yet its main street which leads from the railway is not a

handsome avenue leading to the incomparable sea-front. It is an ignoble slum, lined with squalid eating and drinking houses, in the style of the East End of London. Mannheim has no natural advantages, yet the entrance from the station was by a fine avenue leading to an imposing *platz*. What Mannheim had, till allied aviators and German revolutionaries damaged its symmetry—and it was only a commonplace entrance to a German town—Brighton with greater reason might and ought to have. Such a resort is a national possession, and its æsthetic defects give a bad impression far beyond the municipal area. None have been more painfully sensible to the sordid aspect of the entrance to Brighton than convalescent Colonial soldiers during the war. One officer, full of gratitude for his treatment in the hospital, said that in his distant home he had always heard of Brighton as a place of radiant beauty, and when the ugly meanness of the entrance met his view, he began to doubt of the greatness of the British Empire of which this was the chief centre of delight.

The artless appreciations made by our Colonial soldiers of what they observed in the Mother Country are not to be treated lightly. The war brought to the old home thousands of the youth

of Greater Britain, who, escaping the fate of other thousands of their comrades on the battle-fields, came to England, which few of them would have seen under normal circumstances. Nothing was more touching than the romantic sentiment expressed by many of these young British citizens from the over-seas, and as the Empire is mainly founded on sentiment, their testimony was valuable. One of their favourite visions of England was that of a land of exceeding loveliness, and some of them had the happiness to realise that patriotic dream. But when they came to places, far from mines and furnaces, which had been wantonly defaced by English people, their disillusion was very sore. Another example of their disappointment occurred at Rugby. A manor-house in the shires was converted into a hospital for Colonial soldiers. Some athletic Anzacs learned that it was near Rugby. Eton and Harrow they had never heard of. But Rugby, the birthplace of the greatest of games, to have seen it would console them for hardships and wounds. So a detachment was presented with railway tickets and it proceeded to Rugby. The pilgrimage was not a success. The approach to the once pretty little market-town near England's centre, described in Moultrie's



verses well known to Rugbeians, is now more repellent even than those with which our fair cities of Oxford, Cambridge, and Chester are disfigured. The brave Anzacs followed from the station a dismal street worthy of a mining town, so mean that the sunlight of a spring day only emphasised its dreariness. The courage which had shone immortal at Gallipoli and on the Somme was cowed by the sullen aspect of modern British architecture and some of them took refuge in an inn to rest their wounded limbs. One or two intrepid spirits who had read *Tom Brown* persevered to the historic Close, and saw the inscription on the Head Master's wall which marks the sacred spot where Rugby football assumed its unique character before Australia and New Zealand were colonised. But the excursion, undertaken with patriotic enthusiasm, was a failure. The valiant youths instead of taking to their distant homes a happy reminiscence of an English scene of athletic tradition, which is one of the binding forces of the Empire, returned disillusioned because we in England tolerate the defacement of the surroundings of historic sites with buildings such as were rarely erected in Germany in ordinary centres of population.

The decent architecture of the chief arteries of the German cities, which sometimes ruthlessly displaced relics of past ages, was not mere façade to disguise the misery of slums which lay behind. For in the housing of the poor of their great towns the Germans were our superiors, and we might have done well to imitate them. But the Secretary of the famous Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes may be excused if he refrains from discussing that question. That Commission was heralded as the opening of a new social era. The future King of England consented to serve upon it. The last leader of the great Tory party left its table to become Prime Minister. The venerable head of the Roman Church in England brought all his love for the suffering poor to bear on its deliberations. The Chairman was Mr. Gladstone's ablest colleague in his second ministry. All these eminent persons died without seeing any of their recommendations carried out : for it is thirty-four years since the Secretary submitted to the Commission the three Reports which were to solve the problem of housing in the three kingdoms. Now that a whole generation has passed, he sometimes recognises in journals and reviews fragments of his exhumed prose.

For the third of a century those Reports and the vivid evidence have lain buried in blue-books. In that period, up to the war, ten different ministries, representing every shade of opinion, advised three successive sovereigns and eight general elections took place. Why was the question of housing, now said to be of supreme urgency, never made an election cry ? Why was no practical scheme ever presented to Parliament ? To have seen the question in times of peace and prosperity neglected, except for some trivial effort, and then to hear politicians addressing loud cries for housing reform to a nation on the brink of financial disaster is not a cure for scepticism. Every housing scheme will now be a new step towards the abyss of State and municipal socialism. There will be much bad building at the public expense, from which contractors and their friends in authority will profit, and the next generation will see the slum areas of our great towns indefinitely extended, with ill-built houses falling into decay, which will not inspire our future visitors from Greater Britain with patriotic admiration for our national beauties. The authoritative government of Germany had, no doubt, means at its disposal to override the supineness of local officials ; but

the superior condition of German urban areas was chiefly due to the methodic orderliness of the people which our autonomous populations could imitate if they liked.

Another matter on which we might with advantage have taken pattern from Germany, was that of the salaries and pensions paid to legal officials. But there our French and American allies set us an equal example of economy. So without comparing the thriftiness of the legal systems in the German Empire and States with the extravagance of our own, we will note only a few instances to which the war has given glaring pertinence in England. We all know the parsimony exercised in cutting down the small remuneration earned by our soldiers who saved the Empire, whether they were maimed for life or financially ruined by losing their livelihood when summoned to fight for us. This might be defended by a comparison with the German rate of military pensions and indemnities, if our other professions were subject to the German tariff. But during the war there were four political lawyers who sat at home when each morning brought its never-ending lists of young Englishmen who had died protecting their affluent ease. No doubt they read the lists with becoming grief ; but it was



grief softened by the receipt of pensions of £5000 a year paid by the taxpayers to each of these lawyers, for the sole reason that they had already received £10,000 a year of public money when filling the office of Lord Chancellor. One of them had gained his pension by only a few months' service ; another had found the receipt of taxpayers' money so rejuvenating that his total spoils from the public purse amounted to a quarter of a million. The gods love not rich lawyers, who 'lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and touch not the burdens with one of their fingers'—*legis peritis vae*—so they do not die young. Of the Englishmen who did die young on the battlefield, not one in a thousand was ever paid for his mortal services a twentieth part of the tribute paid to one of these pensioners. While the four were drawing £20,000 a year from the nation in its hour of distress, the British Museum was closed, to the sorrow of brave Colonial soldiers, who, between two battles for the Empire, were seeing the sights of the metropolis for the only time in their lives. The opening of the museum might have cost nearly £20,000 a year, and that sum was needed for the pensions of four rich lawyers. At that time a valiant General was placed on half pay, owing to

a difference with the authorities. His honour and bravery were beyond dispute, and the House of Commons was told that his pension was £250 a year—the services of a General officer in the war being computed by our rulers as being worth one-twentieth of the public tribute paid to a retired lawyer. Had the General not been compulsorily retired, his pension might have been increased to a tenth of that given to an ex-chancellor. Here is another example. A judge of the Supreme Court died during the war. Had he been on the bench for fifteen years he could have claimed an annual pension of £3750—a comfortable figure, nearly double the full pay of a Field-Marshal. He had enjoyed a great income as Law Officer of the Crown, and after not fifteen years but fifteen months on the bench his brother-lawyers in the government made him a present, at the taxpayers' expense, of the full pension of £3750. His need for public alms was shown by his will, which was proved at over £200,000.

These abuses are provocations to revolution at a time when every family in the kingdom is familiar with the subject of pensions. The £20,000 a year taken from the taxpayer for the four ex-Chancellors, would if divided bring joy

and relief into hundreds of war-stricken homes. The poverty of some of them is such that an addition of only £20 a year to a war pension would gladden many a modest home, a thousand of which might be relieved by the distribution of the £20,000 claimed by the four. They would have been five, but for the magnanimous action of an ex-Chancellor. In this impersonal study the name of no living British politician has been mentioned : but the name of Lord Finlay deserves to be honoured for his refusal of a pension with astounding patriotism. He must have earned thereby the scorn of some of his colleagues, though his disinterestedness added a dignity to the high office they had filled which has not been conspicuous in our time. One of them argued that a pension conferred on a lawyer is made irrevocable by a sacred compact. This he urged in the case of a retired native judge in India, who, implicated in sedition, was deprived of his pension. The British pensioner was shocked that a mere exhibition of disloyalty should be cause for the forfeiture of a judicial pension. But if a pensioned officer of the native army had lapsed into sedition, he would have lost a good deal more than his pension, without any protest in the House of

Lords. As for the sacredness of a compact which binds an encumbered government to pay big pensions to rich lawyers, it is not so sacred as the obligation which bound it to keep open the British Museum for the benefit of the citizens who paid for it and their soldier guests from the Dominions. If the war compelled the government to break the one pact of public utility, it ought *a fortiori* to have first broken the other, which was a burden to the State.

The superstition that the opulence of legal officials confers a benefit on the community is fostered by the opportunities given to lawyers to plead their own cause. In the week of the Armistice, when the nation had no other feeling than gratitude to its soldiers and sailors, the Lord Mayor gave his yearly banquet. The coincidence of the occasion should have made it an unique national celebration. But the programme adhered to the old lines. So among the speakers at Guildhall there were four lawyers and, incredibly, not one sailor or soldier. The Prime Minister's speech was legitimate and welcome. But on this soldiers' day three other lawyers, drawing between them £30,000 a year of public money, were invited to repeat their old quips and platitudes, imputing glory and honour



to themselves, when the company was longing to hear the modest words of a soldier come from the places where lay a million of our kindred, who by dying had saved the city from flames and rapine. A general from Mesopotamia had just arrived in London : several commanders who had won victory on nearer fields were within reach : the fleet was resting in home waters. If any hero of the army or the navy had been called to speak, the roof of the old hall would have been shaken by the thunders of applause which would have told the lawyers that if they had the pickings of the public purse, the soldier and the sailor possessed the hearts of their fellow-citizens. But such a demonstration would have been a concession to militarism, to put down which, as we are told, our soldiers and sailors died—while lawyers and politicians drew salaries and pensions at home.

The ordinary British citizen, impatient with the costly incapacity of our ministries during and since the war, often says in conversation that government by lawyers is worse than government by soldiers. As in a few years all our men of 'ministrable' age, with the exception of a relatively small number of 'shirkers,' will be persons who fought in the war, we may make

the experiment of government by soldiers. But this would have nothing in common with military government. Nor would it eliminate the lawyers, as many young men who fought in the war will become, or are already, members of the legal profession—which will undoubtedly be benefited by the accession of this superior element. The hard discipline of trench and battlefield will have been not only of ethical advantage in the training of lawyers; it will have strengthened all their faculties, and they will never be outplayed in the game of politics by comrades who have subsequently followed other callings, civil or military. So whatever our antipathy to government by lawyers, it is inevitable, and we must hope that the future rulers of England will be chosen from those who have undergone the wholesome training of war.

As for a government composed of or dominated by professional soldiers, it could never come into existence in England, or if some convulsion of nature produced one it would not last for a month. Soldiers are too straightforward to acquire the sinuosity essential to success in modern politics. The honesty of a brave soldier often takes the form of outspoken criticism of comrades as brave as himself, and when this is

tinged with jealousy, an infirmity found in all professions, he does not dissemble it, as does the politician who will quietly wait his opportunity for the *coup de Jarnac* to disable a rival colleague. The soldier ingenuously blurts out whatever grievance is vexing his soul ; yet he is modest about his own achievements and generous in his appreciation of others. How often has one heard a hero decorated for an act of supreme valour declare that a hundred others in the fight deserved the riband as well as he, only he had the luck to be remarked and reported.

The praise which lawyers and politicians bestow on one another is not of this nature. It is that of a mutual admiration society, whose members eulogise one another and flatter those colleagues who have patronage at their disposal, while reserving a certain measure of implied laudation for themselves. This is the secret of the predominance of lawyers. They have the power of speech, and can argue from the brief in favour of any cause for which they are retained ; so when they gratuitously recite their own praises and the virtues of their profession, they can do this with a sincerity superior to that of their forensic pleading. How different is the mentality of the lawyer, spending his days in

sham warfare with his colleagues, which means nothing to him but his livelihood, to that of the soldier facing the enemy and death in solidarity with his comrades, with no thought of rivalries, which may be discussed only when the fighting is done. Then the soldier's native candour gets the better of his worldly wisdom, and the more brilliant his rank and services, the less reserved his discretion. If only a high legal luminary of corresponding position to that of a field-marshal in the army would publish his sincere opinions of the biggest of his brethren, his work would be of infinite value to students of our body politic, and would not arouse the feelings of regret inspired by the criticisms mutually exchanged by our brave and honest soldiers.

In the future the lawyers will probably form the majority of every ministry, so let us hope that their military service will endow them with qualities hitherto unusual in their profession. The old rule which limited the legal element in the Cabinet to the Lord Chancellor has long been abandoned. The old parliamentary class, trained from boyhood to public service, which made the government of England the envy of the world, is extinct. The new class of placemen, described as 'business men,' has been a



failure in the new departments created for their ruinous experiments. The Labour Party may in time produce able administrators, but as yet its leaders have shown little constructive ability. Thus the political field is clear for the operations of the lawyers. They form the only class which has nothing to fear from revolution, whether it takes a violent form or is effected peacefully by the advent of a Labour majority in the House of Commons and a Labour ministry. The lawyers may in the change lose some of their ornamental trappings. They will not lose any of their power and opulence ; and if the Chancellor is deprived of the Great Seal, he will not give up the ' Purse.'

Since these lines were written they have received corroboration from the lips of an eloquent lawyer of an allied nation. The distinguished ambassador of the United States in London made a speech at the annual dinner of a legal society, and nowhere is the communicative warmth of banquets so expansive as at a gathering of lawyers assembled to crown one another with roses. Speaking as a lawyer, and not as a representative of the American people he used these words : ' What was the League of Nations to be unless it be such as lawyers should build and lawyers should administer ? . . . As the soldier

disappeared, it was the lawyer who must return to guard the temple of constitutional liberty and of public order.' The League of Nations has been criticised in these pages, but nothing half so damnatory of it has been said as this pregnant sentence of President Wilson's envoy. It is in vain to retort to the American legist, 'Vous êtes orfèvre, Monsieur Josse.' His prophecy is true. The tutelary soldier will have to give way to the lawyer—till dangerous service is needed again. As to the lawyer 'guarding the temple of constitutional liberty,' he will be happy to perform that duty, if he is not briefed on the other side. Some of us remember a subtle American lawyer who after the Civil War became a leader of the English bar—Judah Philip Benjamin by name. He had been secretary to Jefferson Davis, the head of the Southern Confederacy, and if his guard of the constitutional temple in America had been successful, the great Commonwealth would have had to dispense with its name of United States, as Mr. Benjamin happened to be 'briefed on the other side.' One fact highly to his credit the learned Ambassador did not mention—perhaps for fear of damping the spirits of the company. He was Solicitor-General of the United States, when his salary

was £2000 a year without fees. If the largest and wealthiest nation in the world can command the services of its acutest intellects at the Bar for one seventh of the pay of an English Law officer, we can follow its example. If our alliance with America should induce this pleasing reform, it will have undermined an evil of greater danger to our nation than militarism, and we shall be able to count one advantage as the result of the tragic war. Perhaps the new type of lawyer who has faced death side by side with disinterested heroes, will clear the profession of the reproach of being a caste of self-seeking egoists, and will initiate its reforms from within.

Meanwhile it is clear that in the long period in which militarism must have a large share in the ordering of the world, a militarist regime could never be set up in this realm, either to coerce the inhabitants or to be a danger to neighbouring nations. The latter could only take place in a modern State where militarism is congenial to the people. In Germany popular submission to it was voluntary. The German army and navy were not volunteer forces. But the system of compulsory service under an autocratic monarch could not have lasted without

the consent of the nation—which, when war was declared, was enthusiastic and unanimous. From the first weeks we saw this united nation in arms, committing outrages in defiance of military law and glorying in their atrocity. These were not the acts of a people coerced by militarism. They were the spontaneous manifestations of the soul of Germany. Militarism had not made these men savages. It had only put into their eager hands weapons which they used according to the ethics of their savage nature. Militarism indeed may have a purifying and elevating influence on human material if that material is good. If it is bad, it makes it worse. Hence, German militarism was a public evil and an international danger, while militarism in England and in France had different results.

We have a most important but unobtrusive section of our nation which is the pure product of militarism—our navy. From his childhood, when his elders destined for the army or for civil pursuits were enjoying school-boy freedom, a naval officer has lived a life of military discipline as severe in peace as in war. He and his men are trained to the use of the deadliest instruments of destruction, yet the gentle humanity of the British sailor of every rank is only equalled



by his bravery and modesty. Ennobled by an isolated life of daily peril in contact with the infinite, there is no nobler type than the fighting men of our navy. If there were truth in the general theory of the brutalising influence of militarism, the British seaman would be as cruel a barbarian as the German. When the war came those who did not look for honour or good breeding in German landmen, thought that their navy, modelled on ours, would conform to the chivalrous war-code observed by the fraternity of the sea. The cowardly crimes of German seamen showed that naval training which humanised the nature of British sailors, brought out in the Germans the ferocity of the lowest branches of the human family. That militarism in itself is not an influence for evil except on evil material, was shown by its different effect on the pirates and murderers of the German navy, and on the humane British sailors who were the product of similar discipline.

This is an example of the influence of militarism, in the sense of military discipline, on the members of a profession. For an instance of the effect of militarism, in the sense of military government, we have the great example of France. When the anarchy of the First Republic

threatened the nation with dissolution, it placed itself under the militarist rule of Napoleon Bonaparte, who made modern France and for fifteen years governed a willing people with powers far more absolute than those exercised by the German Emperor. The generation of Frenchmen who grew into manhood under Napoleon's militarism was one of the most cultivated and enlightened ever produced on the fertile soil of France, and in its maturity was the most brilliant of the nineteenth century. In spite of memories of the war-weariness of the nation in the last years of Napoleon's reign, that brilliant generation, after twenty-five years of representative government, had a lingering regret for the epoch. The transport of the Emperor's ashes from St. Helena to Paris quickened that sentiment nineteen years after his death. Eight years later, in 1848, it had so increased, that when the people had upset the excellent parliamentary Monarchy, it used its manhood suffrage, won by that Revolution, to elect as Chief of the State Louis Napoleon, a stranger to France, who had no other quality to recommend him than the name he bore of the great military autocrat. The severest critic of military government would not suggest that the French nation was brutalised under Napoleon's

rule. When the French did run a risk of being brutalised was under the civilian government of the Convention, when the guillotine was a daily spectacle in Paris and many a provincial town. The French came through this infection almost unscathed, and it was the great reconstructive period of the Consulate and the Empire, under Napoleonic militarism, that restored France to health, and saved that inestimable element of human history—French civilisation. As for the Second Empire, it was called a military despotism at first by its opponents, but under it the nation enjoyed a period of rare progress, prosperity and intellectual activity. If Napoleon III. was a disturbing figure in Europe, it was not because he was a military despot, but a restless idealist. Had he been a militarist instead of a dreamer possessed by the doctrine of nationalities, he would not have fatally encouraged the unity of Germany, or have left the armies of France in the state of unpreparedness which provoked the challenge of Bismarck and Moltke in 1870. But supposing we accept the assumption that the Second Empire was a military autocracy, it only affords another proof that a militarist regime has no brutalising influence on a people that is not already brutal. The genera-

tion reared under the Second Empire has not yet passed away, and its survivors are with us to give an example of amenity to their successors who are certainly not more ingratiating inheritors of the old Latin civilisation, though they were brought up under the Parliamentary system.

It is easier to prove that militarism, in whatever form it is imposed, does not brutalise people who are not naturally brutal, than to discover the source of German barbarism, as displayed in the great war of the twentieth century. When we contrast the cruelty of German soldiers to civilians in occupied territory with the conduct of the British at Cologne, of the French at Mayence, and of the Americans at Coblenz, where the population, with its Teutonic submissiveness to force, is content in the security assured by the military law of its humane conquerors, we may have some idea of what would have been the fearful experience of England, if the Germans had been in possession of the Thames valley, as the allies are of the Rhenish province. Never should we forget that we were saved from the invasion of the Huns, with its massacres and rapine, by the sacrifice of the youth of our nation.

A plausible theory to explain the barbarism of the Germans is the relative recency of their



civilisation. It is easy to point out that before Germany had come forth from the shadows of the Dark Ages, England had lived through the glories of the Elizabethan era and the polished urbanity of our Augustan age, while France had produced the immortal splendours of the *Grand Siècle*. We may quote contemporary witnesses to show that in the days of *la guerre en dentelles* the armies of Marlborough between two battles would fraternise with their polite enemies the French, avoiding their allies, the murderous German hordes under Prince Eugène. We may calculate that between the time when Frederick the Great sent for Voltaire to educate his subjects, and 1851 when Bismarck took his seat at the restored German Diet as the envoy of Prussia, only a century intervened, the two ends of which marked the dawn of German culture and the beginning of the regime of 'blood and iron'—a space too brief for civilisation, a plant of slow growth, to strike deep roots in a coarse soil lately brought into cultivation. There is reason in this argument, but it has some weak points. For example, Germany two hundred years ago was far in advance of England and France in the art of music, perfection in which ought to have a humanising influence on a people,

and when Voltaire came to Potsdam, Bach and Handel had completed their sublime work.

The weakness of the theory is also apparent in the fact that Germany with another half century added to its short period of civilisation since the Franco-Prussian war, has shown itself signally more barbarous than in 1870. No doubt the regime of militarism, willingly accepted by the Germans, has not softened their native brutality. But since their last war they have enjoyed in their national existence at home nearly fifty years of advanced civilisation, such as no other nation has experienced. In education, in orderly administration, in the machinery of daily life, in the prosperous organisation of their commerce and industry, they have partaken of the highest advantages of modern civilisation—and in the conduct of war they have behaved like primitive savages. The question of the results on human nature of the modern developments of civilisation is not one that can be conclusively discussed at the present hour of rapid transition. We may ask if we ourselves are more civilised, if our French friends are more civilised than fifty years ago. Before obtaining an answer we must have a new definition of civilisation. That which was called civilisation is advancing with

such swift strides in these astounding years of the mechanical age that the human race is being transformed, in its ethical standards, in its actions, in its capabilities. Future investigators may determine the reason why the Germans acted with such atrocious cruelty in a war which the western nations, engaged in it, conducted with unprecedented humanity. The horrors committed in the Russian revolution do not guide us to a solution. The Bolshevists have been inspired and helped by Germans, but few of their leaders are of Teutonic race. Trotsky and a number of the Bolshevist terrorists are Jews, and their cruelties, more appalling even than those committed by the Germans in Western Europe, cannot be ascribed either to the influence of militarism or to the newness of German civilisation.

Though from the first days of the war the Germans manifested their odious qualities, a certain number of British citizens helped the cruel enemy, stupidity rather than disloyalty being perhaps the cause of their perverse conception of duty. A few examples of what took place in England during the most precarious days of the war will throw some light on this

unhappy phase of the national defence, and may afford a lesson for the future.

In a military area where friends of Germany, chiefly of alien race, were so numerous that the legend arose that the maps of the German air-force indicated that it was not to be bombed, the authorities of one borough showed alarming tolerance of enemy aliens. It was the fault of the government, which permitted German agents to remain on our soil to prepare the way for its invasion, and then, instead of attenuating this blunder by having the spies watched in military areas by expert detectives, it actually confided this task to provincial policemen who, often amenable to local influences and trained only in the simple art of constabulary duty, were incapable of encountering the subtlest agency ever organised for the destruction of England. Two residents in the town, of the afflicted class called 'large ratepayers,' Englishmen who knew Germany, urged upon the local rulers the danger of their apathy. But they were treated as intrusive meddlers, bringing discord into a place where racial questions were banned as injurious to the prosperity of the town, which thrived on a somewhat mixed population. Yet the war was so near that the east wind bore thither the roar



of battle and in nearly every street were houses mourning for boys slain by the Germans, while hundreds of other young townsmen were being hurried to the front whence came daily convoys of wounded—a piteous sight for British eyes, but one of joy for the German guests of the town. So the two residents declined to pay their rates, declaring that they could not contribute to the payment of a police-force which refused to expel the Germans from the borough. To make their aim definite, they demanded the expulsion of a conspicuous German who, strong in cosmopolitan support, assumed the air of an insolent man-in-possession awaiting the arrival of his principals. The two ratepayers were darkly warned that when the invasion came their houses would be the first visited by the invaders; but what troubled them most was the delay in the serving of the summons for non-payment of rates, as they counted on the report of the trial to give a salutary warning to the country. When at last the summons was issued, the authorities had obtained legal opinion that the ratepayers had no right to be heard in the defence of their default, the sole question being the legality of the rate. This was a victory as gratifying to the local authorities as the crossing of the Rhine would have been

to less complex Englishmen. However, a new incident compelled the expulsion of the German, and the defaulters paid their rates without legal process. Even that was not the end of this amazing incident. During the war it was easier for a German expelled from a British military area to get a permit from the civilian police to return to it than for an Englishman to procure a passport to visit a wounded son in France. So the ejected German reappeared in the town till stopped by the vigilance of private citizens. One of them hearing that the man had been seen in a shop, buying articles in which he sometimes traded, said to the shopkeeper : ‘ You have been trading to-day with a German alien enemy.’ The shopman replied with bland politeness : ‘ I do not know him as a German but only as a customer.’ *Sono mercanti* was the reproach thrown at us by our great Corsican adversary. Yet it would be unjust to think that during the war all British traders thought of nothing but their profits, to the extent even of aiding the enemy in his commerce. Within a mile of this unworthy scene there were a score of shops from which young men had gone forth to suffer and to die. From this a sailor-boy had been shot down by German pirates when rowing

away from a torpedoed ship : from that a youth had left the counter to win the Victoria Cross and to die the next day : to another an athletic champion had returned without his limbs. But the existence of British tradesmen who, while we were fighting Germany for our existence, callously looked on Germans not as enemies, but only as 'customers,' showed that weak local authorities when making light of patriotic duty were not disavowed by all their constituents.

The government was chiefly to blame for the invasion of military areas by hordes of dangerous aliens from Central Europe. In certain towns the proportion of these immigrants on the public places was so great, that as one scanned their cruel, sinister faces, one had a passing vision of the scenes of horror in cities where Bolsheviks prevailed. Our feeble government pleaded that they were not enemies but Russian allies. But their language was not that of Russia. It was a German dialect ; and when they spoke English it was with that sickly accent which makes English as spoken by lips accustomed to German the most repellent of the foreign distortions of our language. In it they could be heard boasting how they tricked tribunals into exempting them from military service or from deportation from

England, rich for plunder,—the two fates they feared most. Defenders of the government had the face to talk about England's pride in the right of asylum, and to compare these undesirables with the exiles of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, who left their country poorer for their absence, and brought to England a precious store of genius and industry. It was an ignorant insult to our French allies to compare those noble refugees with these nondescripts whose genius was for usury and 'sweating' and whose industry was that of the house of ill-fame and the gambling den. They showed their gratitude for the weak hospitality of England by insulting Englishwomen if one had the ill-luck to travel with them in the railway-carriages which they were permitted to overcrowd. There were proved cases of their assaulting our wounded soldiers. These scandals were, to our shame, witnessed by hundreds of our colonial forces. Two brave soldiers, an Australian and a Canadian, the one wounded at Ypres, the other on the Somme, commented upon them in almost identical terms. 'Was it to enable these foreign cowards to poison the air of England, and to plunder its people that we left our far-off homes to fight for the old country?' They had won the right to



be jealous of everything which tended to degrade the pride of the Empire and to taint it at its centre. If these brave heroes from the overseas had known the real reason why British politicians tolerated this evil, their commentary would have been even less hopeful for the future of the Empire. It is the future of the race that we ought all to have at heart ; and certain evils which threatened us during the war have left in our midst germs ready to develop the next time the Empire is in danger. So it is well to bear them in mind.

In a very different category there was a small minority of the nation, which gave no help in winning the war. These were the non-combatants known as Conscientious Objectors. This is not the place to analyse the perverse mentality of those abnormal British subjects ; but a few words may be said of this privileged class which is unknown in France. The Conscientious Objectors were generated by the British government and their nursing fathers were the bishops of the Church of England. When conscription was tardily adopted, our rulers had before them the example of France, which ought to have taught them that a nation struggling with a ruthless foe for its existence might have

the balance turned against it by the dispensation from service of a large number of robust citizens who had embraced a populous profession. The British government, in decreeing conscription, exempted from military service all ministers of religion, whether of the two established churches or of the denominations not under State control—thus conferring, with this privilege, quasi-establishment on the Nonconformist and Roman churches, as well as on a few religious societies which are not Christian. This was a blunder, but it might have been repaired by the bishops of the Church of England. Had they repudiated the invidious privilege, had they discerned that in a nation in arms any category of citizens exempted from the defence of the realm by reason of their religious profession must suffer some diminution of their citizenship, they would have done a service to the Church of England unprecedented in the annals of its episcopate. They would likewise have done a service to religion generally within the kingdom ; for the Dissenters and the Roman Catholics could not have sheltered themselves behind a dispensing act which the Established Church had patriotically rejected. The Military Service Act altered the whole status of British

citizenship. It changed the male population, within certain limits of age, into soldiers, with the exception of a few defined categories. Those so exempted were invalids, persons presumably engaged in civil work necessary for the conduct of the war (an exemption which, loosely construed, led to unjust abuses) and ministers of religion. The latter were exempted though physically fit for service, and though not employed in any work essential for the furtherance of the war. They were dispensed from military duty because under the dictates of conscience they had assumed an office which subsequently the law exempted from military service. In the case of the Church of England, this exemption being accepted by the hierarchy, a clergyman could not refuse it, if his conscience did not permit him to abandon his office or to disobey his bishop. The Roman Catholic clergy were in a somewhat similar position. The established Presbyterian and Nonconformist clergy, differently disciplined, made no corporate protest against exemption, and some of them seem to have had conscientious scruples against taking up arms ; though others with noble devotion served and died as combatant soldiers. There is morally a world of difference between the situation

and the conscience of religious officials, specially exempted by the law, and the posture of the irresponsible persons who refused to serve, asserting their individual right to interpret or to disobey the military law according to their personal convenience. But the conscientious objector, whether his objection were founded on genuine scruple, on vanity or on cowardice, would in most cases have been quietly absorbed in the army had not the government created a favoured profession of quasi-conscientious objectors to whose privilege the others made loud appeal.

The devoted bravery of our military chaplains of all creeds showed that it was not from lack of courage or patriotism that the majority of the clergy were absent from the fighting ranks. There were indeed a number of noble fellows, who disregarding their spiritual chiefs and scorning their legal immunity, rushed into the field, where some of them died as simple soldiers. The lot of the younger clergy left in England was not enviable. Either they were brave men chafing against the unwise rule which separated them from all that was best in their generation, or they were of the type which, by setting itself up as a caste apart, has alienated the manhood



of England from religion. During the war the spectacle of stout young men in surplices, singing hymns as they marched through inattentive streets, had no other effect on those that passed by than to raise up visions of other groups of young Englishmen at that hour marching less delicately over the plains of Flanders and the deserts of Mesopotamia. It must be avowed that the conceited complacency of some of the young clergy who stayed away from the war showed that they were of the same abnormal breed as the conscientious objectors. One of them, who had inherited a name honoured in the Church, was so pleased with himself, that he wrote a book on that subject. 'After the bishops,' he said, 'had decided against the adoption of a combatant status by the clergy . . . I did not wait for a moment on episcopal decisions. I turned up St. Thomas, discovered that the profession of arms was forbidden to the clergy, except, as in France, under coercion, and had no hesitation about my attitude.' If it were necessary for an Englishman to consult mediæval authority to 'discover' his patriotic duty, instead of skimming the *Summa*, in the superficial way that less pretentious Objectors consulted the New Testament, he

should have studied the ages before and after Aquinas. Through the Middle Ages to the Renaissance he would have found the warrior-priest, as has been said of him, 'among the glorious artisans of victory against the aggressions of barbarians.' But the young cleric had no need to be persuaded by the schoolman. Like another fastidious hero who disliked battlefields, he had evidently inquired 'with many holiday and lady terms,' about the society he might meet at the Front, and concluded that it would not be agreeable: 'Although I had the opportunity of securing myself a chaplaincy [with the forces in France] I held back owing to the pronouncedly anti-sacramentalist attitude which then almost entirely dominated the Chaplains' Department.' This is exactly the inordinate egotism of the commonplace conscientious objector. Not a spark of feeling had he for England; no conscience had he that the charitable succour of any good unselfish man, whatever his dogmas, might be of comfort to simple Englishmen who were wounded or dying. It is only fair to say that this unusual product of public school and university decided that another church was a fitter sphere for his ministry than the establishment. The exemption of the clergy did harm

not only to the national religion but to the national defence. Among the bad institutions set up by the government were the tribunals for hearing the appeals of men who wished not to fight. Some of them were models of judicial fairness, but many were hot-beds of jobbery, and when flagrant exemption was granted to an 'indispensable' having local influence the justifying comment was sometimes: 'If the parson gets off without having to come before the tribunal, why should we not oblige our neighbours who cannot spare their young men?'

A more insidious system of helping the enemy was practised by a very small number of British citizens. This was the rendering of aid to Germany by means of the English press. The means adopted were so subtle, that sometimes a loyal and honourable journal was made the instrument of German propaganda. A curious case of this kind procured for my name the compliment of being denounced by a gang of German agents in France on the eve of their exposure. To make the short story clear, it will be better to depart from the impersonality of the foregoing pages, and to tell it in the first person.

In February 1917, Mr. Harold Begbie published in the *Daily Chronicle* a conversation he

had with me. As reported it took the form of two columns of eulogy of the French, with one sentence foreshadowing revelations soon to be made, in which M. Caillaux was said to be 'the enemy of England and the friend of Germany.' In March the *Daily Chronicle* printed a letter impugning this appreciation, signed by a French Radical-Socialist deputy, who was no more capable of writing its fluent English than the accomplished 'interviewer' was of reporting the conversation in the cuneiform language of Assyria. There was something so suspicious about it that, before tracing it to its source, I told the editor I would have nothing to say to it. It filled a column of the paper without a word of allusion to my two columns of praise of the French nation, and taking for its text two lines of the interview it was nothing but a long defence of M. Caillaux, the perfidious suggestion being that any criticism of the ex-minister was equivalent to an attack on the French democracy. 'We of the Radical party,' the letter said, 'are surprised that Mr. Bodley should describe our political leader, M. Caillaux, as "the friend of Germany and the enemy of England."' I doubted if this deputy had the right to speak on behalf of 'the Radical party' as none of my



French Radical friends regarded as their leader the politician named. But if my impression were wrong, it was certain that the patriotic Radical press would have much to say about the deputy's letter. So I asked the *Courrier de la Presse* to send me every word published on the subject in the French journals, and it sent me one cutting—from the *Bonnet Rouge*! The notorious organ of Germany was chosen for the publication of the French version of the English letter in the *Chronicle*. The next week came a leading article from the *Bonnet Rouge*, which would have been farcical had it not been part of a sordid tragedy. The German subsidised paper thanked me for having provoked the 'noble letter' of the deputy, whom it called 'notre ami,' as it was time to expose a crafty campaign organised against the French democracy by a set of English reactionaries, 'who associated in their hatred the socialists in France and the Whigs in England.' This was news to one who had never taken part in a political campaign, and who had loved the last of the Whigs, without perceiving their resemblance to continental socialists. The article, entitled '*Se connaître ; se comprendre,*' ended with a laudation of four British ministers and ex-ministers, three of whom did not, in my

opinion, deserve the praise of the agents of Germany, and with an appeal to the English democracy to recognise their true friends, who were 'the enemies of ignorance and falsehood'—and who were likewise the hirelings of Germany.

It would be needless to disinter this rubbish but for the fact that every one in Paris connected with journalism and politics then knew that the *Bonnet Rouge* was a German organ. Yet at a moment of acute anxiety in England, it was made to appear that a loyal English journal was the consignee or associate of the notorious *Bonnet Rouge*, which had the effrontery to express sorrow that a high-toned journal such as the *Daily Chronicle* should have published my opinions, which, it indicated, were not in sympathy with the *Bonnet Rouge*, and were more worthy of the *Times*. Three months earlier M. Clemenceau, not yet in power, knew that the *Bonnet Rouge* was in the pay of Germany. How then could an honourable English journal have even indirect relations with this mercenary of treason? The *coulisses* of journalism are unknown to me. All that I know of the *Daily Chronicle* is that no newspaper rendered higher patriotic service during the war than that which day by day presented to those at home each phase of the tragic

struggle recorded by the vivid pen of Mr. Philip Gibbs. The fact that a loyal English newspaper could be utilised even for a single day as an auxiliary of the *Bonnet Rouge*, showed how formidable was the machinery of intrigue perfected by the Germans for the destruction of the allies. A few years hence we may have it to encounter again. So perhaps the recital of this warning story needs no apology.

There is no need to deplore the treason of the *Bonnet Rouge*, for without it the political saviour of France might not have been called to power. During the incident related above, M. Clemenceau was quietly collecting evidence. Then on July 22, 1917, a great historical date of the war, he mounted the tribune of the Senate, and in the old trenchant style with which in the Chamber of Deputies he used to pass sentence on ministries, he denounced with more imperious right the official protectors of the German-paid criminals who were disabling France at its centre and plotting to cripple its gallant armies in the field. The first result of M. Clemenceau's action was the suppression of the *Bonnet Rouge* and the arrest of the editor and other members of the staff, the former being mysteriously strangled in prison. The nation hailed the old patriot who had dared

to expose the mortal danger threatening the allies, and who was ready to uproot it. So, that autumn he became Prime Minister, and while the open war was now conducted with new vigour, he crushed the clandestine campaign for Germany with rude and rapid operations. In the first months of his ministry M. Caillaux was arrested ; Bolo Pacha was tried and shot, as was also the financial manager of the *Bonnet Rouge* ; and four of the staff of that journal were sent to penal servitude.

M. Clemenceau is the only civilian, of all the powers, whose personal participation in affairs was decisive in settling the fate of Germany, and we may rejoice that it was a steadfast friend of England to whom France confided this mission. For the greater part of my life I have known M. Clemenceau. In 1910, when he was already in his seventieth year, a few months after his retirement from his first tenure of office which he had always declined till 1906, I wrote of him in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, that ' of all French public men in all political groups he was throughout his long career the most consistent friend of England.' The tribute might have been worded more strongly. For when relations were so strained between French and British governments that



old French admirers of England wavered, Clemenceau never faltered. Indeed when the ill-starred Franco-Russian alliance was ruffling the mutual relations of our two countries, it was through Clemenceau's staunchness to England that he unjustly incurred unpopularity in France and lost his seat in the Chamber. Those days of misunderstanding are far away, and the best guarantee that they shall never return, amid the irritating difficulties which must arise in the reconstruction and resettlement of the world, is the survival of the veteran who incarnates French patriotism and Anglo-French friendship.

Among the categories, specified in the foregoing pages, of persons who regarded the war as a source of advantage, the last-mentioned category, that of offenders convicted for treason, has been inconsiderable in Great Britain. Though in time of war they deserve the severest penalty, the guilt of traitors, who knew that the firing-platoon, the gallows, or at least the prison awaited them if detected, was morally less than that of some of the persons included in other categories, who had no cause to fear punishment for the wrong they did to the State. Some of them, on

the contrary, were betitled over the heads of their fellow-citizens by reason of the money they made out of the misery and mourning of the war. In all these categories the guiltiest offenders seem to be the marauders who made fortunes out of the great tragedy, and the politicians who licensed their rapine. Such is the *inconscience* of ministers that, at the moment of their official confession that they had brought the nation to the verge of bankruptcy, they proposed that their own salaries below £5000 a year should be raised to that figure. Thus they celebrated the fifth anniversary of the declaration of war by asking that their incompetency should be rewarded with salaries double that which France pays to its Prime Minister, M. Clemenceau, for his modest services. Even a House of Commons packed with placemen shied at the proposition that it was unworthy of a great and rich country not to overpay its political supernumeraries. The retort was easy that, thanks to their incapacity and waste, the country was no longer rich and its greatness would soon be a memory. If ministers had confined their mis-spending to their own salaries and pensions, the national finances might have borne that needless burden. What has ruined

our finances is the government licence to pillagers to despoil the war-exhausted nation. For four years and a quarter no morning ever dawned without the certainty that before the clock had gone its round, hundreds of young Englishmen would die in battle, often after long hours of solitary agony ; and no morning ever dawned without the equal certainty that older British citizens before the day's end would add to their gains made out of the war, which was destroying these young lives, without whose sacrifice there would have been no protection for the equivocal traffic and luxury of these *mercanti*.

It will have been noticed that all the categories, criticised in these pages for their conduct during the war, contained only a small proportion of the population of Great Britain, the bulk of which was sound in its patriotism. But it often happens that a malignant growth in the physical body which, if not extirpated, will shatter the strongest constitution, is treated with fatal neglect at the beginning, because it seems confined to a little spot. The conduct of the working classes as a whole during the war compares favourably with that of the small sections of well-to-do people whose behaviour has been criticised. No doubt

there were serious troubles in certain industries among workers who were exempted from military service. These troubles were fomented by alien revolutionaries, hostile to Great Britain, whose presence in our midst is, as we have noted, due to the disquieting inaction of ministers. The troubles were also stimulated by the spectacle of fortunes made out of the war which had a justly provocative effect on the men who came back from it. It is not surprising that the soldiers who saved the Empire should be dissatisfied with their situation at home, and should be easily talked into discontent by men less brave but more fluent than they. The irritation of the men who won the war was justified by a comparison of the slender pensions doled out for their glorious services with the lavish salaries and pensions taken by politicians who did not fight, and with the millions squandered, with the complicity of ministers, for the benefit of the most pernicious class of the community. None of us who did not take part in the war—not even those who have had it brought home to them by the heart-breaking narratives of heroes who lived through it—can have any conception of the horror endured by our soldiers. Sometimes insufficient sympathy has been shown to them by those who



stayed at home. This is seen in sentences of harsh severity passed for offences against the common law by magistrates, who are mostly of the prosperous trading class, and by judges, on brave men whose services to England are more valuable than their own can ever be. Such a victim of ungrateful justice may reflect how happier had his lot been if instead of enduring the inferno of the trenches he had been able to stay at home and to appropriate with impunity thousands of pounds of the taxpayers' money. Obviously it would be contrary to public policy to let military service be a licence for breaking the law. But every month endured by a soldier in active warfare ought to count as remission for a part of any penalty he subsequently incurs.

All the intrepidity of our fearless young officers, who were too willing to sacrifice their precious lives, would not have availed without the magnificent onslaught and resistance of the rank and file. The adamant courage of the British soldier called forth the whole-hearted admiration of our valiant French allies. One of their foremost experts on military subjects, M. Joseph Reinach, who in the third week of the war lost his only son, a young Hellenist of profound learning, to solace his grief wrote day by day a chronicle of

the war, signed 'Polybe,'—after the Greek historian of Rome, whom the younger Pitt assiduously studied. One of his visits to the British Front was after the formidable German offensive of March and April 1918, when he wrote a fine tribute to the endurance of the British soldier. Quoting one of the versions of the origin of the familiar title given to our great adversary of Napoleon, he said : 'Wellington, for two hours of heroic patience, won the name of "The Iron Duke," but how much better do these men of incomparable metal deserve the epithet'; and he described how week after week, in spite of the enemy's overwhelming numbers and in spite of strategic mistakes, they disputed every inch of the ground, though fourteen British divisions had to support the attacks of forty German divisions, which moreover were reinforced daily by fresh troops. The braver our soldiers were the more they had to suffer. A gallant young officer whose dangerous duty it was in the latter part of the campaign to be first in the German dug-outs to search for documents left by the enemy, one day found a prize of unusual value. It was a handbook, methodically printed by the Germans for the use of their staff, classing the British divisions in their order of 'frightful-

ness.' The division which stood first in the German list had suffered severely in performing its repeated prodigies of valour, and had been sent to the base for a rest. But, with this German testimony to its moral effect on the enemy, it was recalled from its short repose, and sent again and again to the forefront of the battle, until the Germans were finally checked, when few of the original heroes of that division were left to take part in the concluding triumphs. It is easy to imagine the feelings of a dauntless survivor of such an immortal corps—one of the heroes who had struck such terror into the Germans that in their own defence they had secretly honoured them with the noblest certificate ever indorsed by a foe—when he finds himself disregarded in England. No one at home seems to have heard of the epic story except a wounded comrade or two; unless perchance he meets with a brave and neglected officer who time after time led him 'over the top,' whose rewards and prospects are little more substantial than his own. No wonder there is just discontent in all ranks of the soldiers returned from the war, in every division of our devoted army, when owing to the demeanour of a conspicuous minority in all classes, the

nation they have saved seems to be given up to luxury and waste.

After the Conference at Versailles the *Figaro* invited a large number of Frenchmen distinguished in literature, art, and learning to give their opinions on the benefits of the peace just signed. The testimony of these close spectators of the war, representing every school of French thought, is not inspiring. The true note of patriotism is there, but its tone is resigned rather than hopeful. The recovery of Alsace and Lorraine is of course welcomed: but the chief benefit of peace, according to most of these able Frenchmen is negative—it is the absence of war, peace having neither brought nor indicated any solution to the social and political problems which, acute before the war, have been aggravated by it. One philosophical writer of the younger school, M. André Beaunier, is absorbed by the thought which runs through these pages: ‘Les bienfaits de la paix? Ne plus se dire à toute heure du jour et de la nuit qu’une jeunesse est en train de mourir.’ Another, M. Julien Benda, regards this inconclusive collection as a remarkable exhibition of ‘la réponse à côté,’ of which a



classic masterpiece is Fénelon's *Lettre à l'Académie*. The French Academy had asked what ought to be the occupation of its members when its Dictionary was finished, and Fénelon's letter left the Forty no wiser than they were. Subsequent history has justified M. de Cambrai for taking refuge in a 'réponse à côté.' He has been dead two hundred years and the Dictionary is not yet finished ; for when the last letter of the alphabet is reached the revision goes back to the first.

In this a certain analogy may be found with the present situation. The occupation of the Academy when the Dictionary was completed could not be determined because that work promised to be perpetual. So at the present time no one can appraise the benefits of the peace or the results of the war, because they form part of a long operation which has only just begun, and which will require many a recommencement.

This little book deserves the criticism addressed to the eminent Frenchmen who failed to specify the benefits of the peace. The question posed on the first page of this chapter : 'Why has our young generation perished ?' has not been answered, because it is unanswerable. So the

only way of replying to that question is by 'une réponse à côté.' In it an attempt has been made to give a dispassionate exposition of some of the results of the war, as affecting the British nation and Empire. The incomplete conclusions arrived at are not more cheerful than the reflections of representative Frenchmen on the situation ; for we have no such consolation as that which the restoration of Alsace and Lorraine has given to France.

In the sombre horizon in which the official end of the war left us, there are a few rays of light. One of them is the alliance of England and France, which tardily realises the cherished hopes of the writer of these pages, who thirty years ago, in difficult days of international strain, began to work for a better understanding between the two countries—the happiest task that ever an Englishman imposed upon himself. If only we had possessed a strong statesman, of foresight and boldness to convert the *entente*, which came later, into a formal alliance, it is improbable that Germany would have dared to attack France and England openly united, and two and a half millions of the youth of our two nations would not have perished.

Another of our few consolations derived from

the war is that it has anew consolidated the British Empire under the Crown, at the terrible price of the voluntary sacrifice of thousands of young lives of our fellow-citizens from beyond the seas. So against the evil results of the war, we can put into the balance the integrity of the Empire, which has been strengthened, excepting in one spot near home. To maintain it, the preservation of the Imperial Crown, with its attributes, is essential. We have noted how public opinion in the oversea dominions has been justly angered by invasions of the prerogatives of the Crown of England by British ministers, who fail to recognise the changed relative position of the component parts of the Empire. Whatever harm is thus inflicted on the British Constitution and on the social order of this island, the Imperial Crown, which has been defended by the best blood of the United Empire, must remain superior to the proceedings of politicians at home.

Perhaps the brightest ray of light which breaks through the clouds is that which illumines the manifestation of the young and gallant Prince of Wales. To him, who shared with the devoted youth of the Empire, the hardships of the war, his royal father might repeat the words reported

by Froissart, which were spoken to the Black Prince by their ancestor, who was King of England nearly six hundred years ago. On a battlefield near the Somme, that stream of tragic memory well known to our young Prince, the King thus addressed the third Prince of Wales : ' My brave son, you have shown yourself worthy of empire.' ' Worthy of empire ' indeed is the illustrious young soldier, whose solace on the battle-ground was to associate with our brave brethren from the overseas, and whose imperial instinct inspires him to cultivate in their distant homes the friendship of those in our far dominions who sent their sons to fight and to die for the Empire. No Britons who have suffered in the war can look upon his young face and figure without emotion ; for he is a rare survivor of the lost generation. In his gracious person he also represents ' The Romance of the Battle-Line ' —which has been almost forgotten in the latter pages of this book.

*January 1918-August 1919.*





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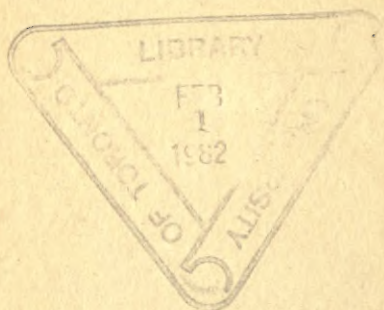
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